

WHO IS IN CONTROL: A MODEL FOR RECOGNIZING
AND ERADICATING UNHEALTHY POWER AND
CONTROL IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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This project will be for St. Andrew UMC, Kansas City, MO. The problem this project will address is unhealthy power in the local church caused by lack of accountability. A lack of accountability will usher in unhealthy power, which will eventually lead to church decline. When leadership of the local church is trained to recognize and understand the effects of healthy power in the church culture, it will impact church life. The methodology used will be qualitative and quantitative methods. This will consist of pre-tests, post-tests, interviews, and a sermon series. The proposed outcome will educate the church on control.

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The author would like to thank his wife Linda Settles for her support and encouragement. Uncles, who were always there with encouraging words James Walton and Melvin Settles, who have always believed in me and have always been there for me. Thanks to my mother Mary Settles who supported me with prayers, sister, and brothers for standing by my side and supporting me. Thanks to my professional associates Dr. Douglas Petty, Dr. Chad White, and Dr. Faith Allen for their feedback and theological suggestions.

The author would like to thank the peer group for their insight, especially Ronnie King, and Drucilla Roane. Thanks to St Andrew UMC, and my contextual associate team who also serve as the church's Nominations and Leadership Development Team: Rev. Ayinde Jones, Minister Maria Millentree, Marcus Millentree, Sharon Parker, Rev. Donna McDaniel, and Charles Parker. Last but not least the author wants to acknowledge and thank mentors, Dr. Donnell J. Moore and Dr. Angela D. Washington for their guidance and spiritual support.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my deceased sister, Jacqueline Angela Settles, who encouraged me in my early years in ministry to go for my doctorate degree.

INTRODUCTION

This project will address the issue of unhealthy power and control in the local church. The researcher defines the local church as pastors, ministry leaders, and laity. While power and control are classically different in definition, the two terms will be used interchangeably in this model, with the understanding that power and control can be healthy or unhealthy, positive or negative.

Historically, the practice of unhealthy power and control has existed and has been operating in institutions, homes, schools, and churches for a long time. The practice of unhealthy power and control has often been overlooked in the church, thus causing the church to decline and eventually closing her doors. For years the church has stood by and done little to nothing to address this issue. The church has unknowingly, and sometimes knowingly, allowed this practice of unhealthy power and control to live, breathe, and operate in the church.

It is through the researcher's personal journey dealing with unhealthy power and control, and how God freed the researcher from unhealthy power and control that frames the context for this paper. Therefore, this project will identify, educate, and train the church to understand the effects of unhealthy power in the church culture.

Chapter one, Ministry Focus, explains the ministry context in which the researcher serves and the purpose of the ministry focus. The ministry focus is where the

researcher's context and personal life's journey intersect to form the basis for this project. Reflecting over life's issues and serving in ministry, these two experiences helped the researcher to face the challenges within the researcher's own personal life, while simultaneously identifying the needs for the church to change and become healthy.

Chapter two, Biblical Foundations, supplied the researcher with scriptures, the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, which pointed to unhealthy power and control. This chapter will reveal to the reader how unhealthy power and control was used in biblical times and how God responded to it. This chapter will prove how the modern day church is the first cousin to the synagogues and first century churches.

Chapter three, Historical Foundations, focuses on how unhealthy power and control shaped the early church thinkers and Christianity, and how that informs the ways in which we experience power and control today. This chapter will begin in the eighteenth century, tracing how the early church fathers handled conflicting issues, and how decisions were made to address the problems in the early church. The chapter then moves into the nineteenth century and to the early twentieth century, exposing the issues pertaining to unhealthy power and control in the modern day church. This chapter gives evidence on how pride, greed, titles, and position all played a part in how we see the churches in the twenty-first century.

Chapter four, Theological Foundations, examines those theologians that specialize in the subject of unhealthy power and control. These theologians challenge the church to live out her true identity. Scholars point out how the political church has separated herself from the community and her needs. Therefore, the theological foundation forces scholars to ask the question, what is the church? What is the main role of the church? Not only

does this chapter reveal what theologians' and scholars' views are on unhealthy power and control, but this chapter also gives evidence of what we know about power and control through the eyes of God.

Chapter four reveals how all human power and authority comes from God because God is sovereign. It outlines how humans abuse power, and how eventually that misuse of power destroys and divides the body of Christ. The theological understanding of "unity" in the body of Christ is significant for the twenty-first century church today.

Chapter five, Theoretical Foundations, examines the practical model in ministry. Not having a healthy structure for those serving in leadership causes a destructive pattern for members and prospective members to grow in Christ. The barriers that live between unhealthy leadership and transformative leadership are a bureaucratic culture, embedded conflict, and personal constraints.

This chapter also exposes new insights on power and control outside the church as well, by discovering other disciplines that speak to the issues of power and control. The researcher reveals what has been said through sociological and psychological views on power and control.

Since the order of control is woven into America's fabric, in other words, it is the way of life, humanity is taught from the beginning of birth and into adulthood to strive for power and control. The sociologist says that power and control is a way to satisfy and obtain gratification because the individual has a need to control his or her environment, so there must be some reason for this desire. That desire sometimes is simply to make the person feel good.

Chapter six, Project Analysis, provides data used to analyze the model that the researcher conducted. This data will expose strengths, weaknesses, what went well, and what did not. The analysis will point out what could have been done differently to make the model better and to support the hypothesis: when the leadership of the local church is trained to recognize and understand the effects of healthy power in the church culture, it will impact church life.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

After doing a critical and historical analysis of the context, it seems apparent that St. Andrew United Methodist Church has not addressed the issue of unhealthy power and control, and the lack of accountability from the leaders, and that this issue and other issues have followed the church from conception. For eighty-seven years the church has not been able to keep members or attract new members mainly because of their desire to control in a unhealthy way, and operating without accountability and a healthy leadership structure.

In 1926 a group of members from Centennial Methodist Church began a new spiritual journey. It has been said that they wanted a church of their own. In 1941 the church moved to 2400 Troost Avenue and in 1977 the church caught afire. The fire destroyed the seven-two year old building. The church had housed at least five congregations of various denominations in a place they called home. Back then the church had about two hundred fifty members.

From the time of conception to the present, twenty pastors served St. Andrew. Prior to my appointment at St. Andrew, most of the pastors, leaders, and laity made it difficult for the church to welcome and embrace change. Many of the members have said that most of the pastors were just passing through, or that St. Andrew was seen as a

church for pastors to get promoted to a bigger or better church. And others felt that St. Andrew was a place to say that they had a church. Over the years St. Andrew lost their pride, had no excitement, and no mission or vision. Some of the past pastors did not challenge the congregation. They allowed the church to basically do whatever they wanted to do. Because the church's membership is mostly comprised of families, it might give one the impression that the control lies within the largest family.

The church is made up of two large families and the families have not been able to walk side by side. For years tension has built up between the two families. To the guest, St. Andrew is seen as a church being divided and the two families do not agree on any level. It was said that this type of behavior has been a real turn off even for the members that are not related to these families.

Because of St. Andrew's desire for control, it is difficult for the church to reach new people and new families in the community. When a guest comes in, it is very plain to see that St. Andrew does not know how to make the guest feel welcomed and comfortable. They do not reach out to first time guests, so guests do not come back. St. Andrew does not seem to recognize how their need to control is one of the contributing factors that keeps the possibility of first time guests from returning.

The need to control and a lack of accountability has been a disadvantage at St. Andrew. There are several members in the church that are hard to reach. When it comes to starting new ministries for the community and for the members, the older members suggest using old techniques in their existing ministries. In other words, it appears that St. Andrew is trying to put new wine into old skins. It has been said that when their kids grew up and were able to move away, they do not come back on a regular basis. They

only come when the church has special days, such as Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day.

The seniors in the church have held their positions for years without making any attempt to embrace the younger generation. It seems from an observation that the seniors are threatened by change. They would rather continue doing what is not working, than step out on faith and attempt to do something new. It is difficult to invite those who are not serving to serve for fear of being scrutinize or rejected. Therefore, it is apparent that they are seen as the minority and not the majority, so it might feel strange to them when asked to lead a ministry.

Some of St. Andrew did not want to see the order of worship change. They stood one by one and challenged a worship service that would be much more inviting and easier for the guest to follow than the one that they were using. They had more liturgy than needed. The hymns that they were singing were slow and did not invite the congregation into a worship experience that one would be able to walk away from feeling revived. They fought and argued over where instruments should be placed, and reminisced about back in the day when the church did not have drums. They were very much an inward church and they wondered why no one wanted to visit.

Some of them walked around with frowns instead of smiles, which was unattractive. They thought there was nothing wrong with the parking lot. The lot had weeds growing around the perimeter of the church. Weeds were growing inside a flower garden that somebody started. The electric sign did not work, the paint began to peel off the insignia of the flame that indicated that this church was United Methodist. It clearly showed the community that the church did not care about how the outside appearance

looked. The picture of the handicapped signs faded away because of the sun. No one saw a need to change the sign out. Trash was another issue. Soda bottles, food, beer cans, and whiskey bottles were a part of St. Andrew's outside décor. But even still, every now and then a guest would come in and make themselves welcome and find something, a small token of the worship experience, and then join.

Those who are not in a controlling circle do not know how to avoid the antagonistic approach from the gate keepers, so the level of their enthusiasm is very low. After careful observation and interviewing certain members of St. Andrew, it is apparent that a low level of trust is in the church. Most of the members do not trust the district, conference, one another, and the pastor at times. They do not trust the UMC process.

The leaders of St. Andrew have shared with the author that the way the United Methodist denomination works with changing pastors, the process has not been one that they welcome or understood. Many of them have said that, that is one of the reasons we do things our way, because we cannot keep a pastor. So new leaders do not trust the old leaders; and the old leaders do not trust the conference. The church failed to understand how the United Methodist conference operates. The UMC church as well as the pastor are both in a process. St. Andrew refused to accept that several components are in place to suggest why the pastor should move. It is in the United Methodist process.

It has been the writer's experience that no one has held the seniors accountable or the church leaders for their lack of service and their unwillingness to let others come to the table and serve. It has also been the writer's experience that St. Andrew has demonstrated a lack of practicing good administration for the church.

The elected officers did not know how to make decisions for the church nor did they know how to operate as a functioning body that is supposed to govern the church. They mostly operated the church on whatever sounded good or whoever had the most control method. Another way they controlled the direction of the church is through their tithes and offerings.

Certain individuals in the church feel that their money can buy them power and control over the ministries in the church. These members have been allowed to demonstrate their control through the giving of their money. It has been said that if they cannot have their way then they will stop giving. And some will even not show up for service, so that they hold the church hostage.

The church has a few members who felt that their backs were against the wall with no recourse to counteract, so they did nothing. Meanwhile the antagonists, mainly seniors, were allowed to act in such a way that controlled the church to operate in a way that would only benefit them. The church has become very self-centered and they show no concern for those that do not look or act like them. The ushers prefer to sit down and watch first time guest come in rather than stand up and escort the guest to their seats.

Another issue that St. Andrew has is wanting to control their pastors. Many of them feel that since we pay the pastor, we have the right to tell him or her how we want them to serve the church. Many of the UMC churches are laity led. St. Andrew was laity led. The laity at St. Andrew made all the ministry decisions and when it came to supporting special ministry events, certain groups would only support their family's ministry events.

Ministry groups in the church would hijack the congregation on Sunday morning by threatening the congregation to support the event. It got to a point that invited guests would not return, and the guest would make sure to get the message back to the pastor as to why they would not return. People did not want to get scolded, threatened or made to feel bad by the church. The church has been stagnant and has not connected with community organizations for years. They have not shown any kind of interest in neighborhood schools or organizations that are advocates for social justice and change. Social issues that plague the community.

St. Andrew has not made themselves visible to the community for fear of losing their family image and identity and the control over the church. The church is planted in a prime area in the inner city. The community has a robust number of children, youth, and young adults in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The church is centrally located where a major park intersects with the church. A community recreation center is in the area, but the church has not made an effort to seize an opportunity to partner with the “Brush Creek” community recreation center. The center attracts youth, young adults, and some older adults on any given day. The center offers swimming, a computer lab, and indoor recreational activities.

When asking the leaders of the risk-taking mission/outreach/evangelism team, how has the church interacted with the community center, the leaders make excuses about not enough time, or they are too busy. In talking with members St. Andrew is surrounded by a community that is largely made up of unchurched African Americans and some whites. The racial ethnicity demographics around St. Andrew are African American, whites, and Asian. It has been said by school officials by 2021 the school age population

is projected to increase by this growth will span from early elementary to late elementary through high school.

In generalities there are more single households that surround the church than married households. Therefore, the community is ripe, or should I say the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. The church still thinks that it is the pastor's responsibility to go out and bring in the sheep.

In other words it is the pastor's responsibility to grow the church. Many said, after checking the researcher's background, and they came across the researcher's zeal for evangelism, that the church felt that it was the researcher's sole responsibility to go out and bring in the least, last and the lost. In fact a few of the members were actually waiting on that to happen. And still, many of St. Andrew members do not understand why the conference would decide to relocate a pastor, or why it is difficult to keep a pastor.

There are many reasons why a pastor will move from one charge to another. But the one that stands out the most is because the pastor and the church DNA does not match up. If a young, energetic pastor is sent to an older congregation, and the congregation does not want to engage the community, most likely the pastor will not be there too long.

St. Andrew has had a history of changing pastors for one reason or another. Some of the reasons that pastors have moved from St. Andrew are because the church has caused that by simply not being an inviting and welcoming church. And because they have neglected their responsibility as a church in relation to the community over the years. The members have climbed over each other and some have no respect for authority and process, which makes pastoring very difficult and challenging.

Many of the church members do not understand the UMC process, and the author does not totally agree with their excuses, because they run off people that could be potential members. If the church was growing rather than swelling, then there would not be a need to remove that pastor.

Getting St. Andrew to stop being this inwardly focused church starts with getting them to take a close look at themselves first, and then getting them to listen to themselves. Inwardly focused churches think only of themselves. Their programs, their children, their way of relating to outsiders does not exist.

Members do not invite folks to church because they are afraid that new folks might take over the ministries, or come with new ideas that would be better than theirs, and then the church would start growing. All this is avoided when healthy control is taught in the church.

Unhealthy control has been the number one issue in St. Andrew. The author firmly believes that the control stems from low self-esteem, a lack of believing in themselves, an absence of accountability, and a weak leadership structure. The church needs to learn how to let go of old habits and embrace new generations and what they can bring to the table.

After the writer's first appointment, and during the writer's graduate work in seminary, the writer has acquired valuable skills in the area of identifying individual control and control in the church. The writer's personal experiences along with the professional skills have taught the writer how to recognize unhealthy power and control and then, how to take a positive approach to reach a win-win outcome. The writer's experience in seminary, in theology and pastoral care classes, gave the writer insight on

various issues that individuals as well as churches experience with the issues pertaining to control.

The writer's professional experience with the issues of control came through the appointments serving the local church. The writer's first appointment was Shaw United Methodist. This church was a training ground for the writer. The writer learned early on about control issues in the church. This appointment was to a white United Methodist church, and out of that church the writer was the founder of a new church start.

The new church start was mainly African Americans with no previous church experiences. The new church attracted gang bangers who demonstrated unhealthy power and control, single females that did not sit well with following male authority, and young adults who had a rebellious attitude towards accountability and structure. The Shaw congregation wanted the new church start, only so that they could save their church. The kids in the new church were not allowed to play on the jungle gym or play in the outside sand box.

Shaw United Methodist Church was very controlling with building usage. They would not share the daycare rooms or the learning materials. It was very challenging trying to grow a new church in a church that was very controlling. The white congregation did not want the black congregation to use the front entrance into the church.

They wanted the black congregation to use the side entrance. This made the writer and the black congregation think about the days of segregation, separate drinking fountains, restrooms, and eating establishments. The Shaw church were reliving the "Jim

Crow” days all over again. They were inwardly focused, but their focus was a different kind of focus.

After preaching at the Shaw church one day, an older white woman approached the pulpit and said, “N_____ you will never be my pastor!” I was devastated, and this was my first appointment. The Shaw church had only focused on themselves over the years. When the neighborhood transitioned, blacks moved into the neighborhood, whites moved out. This left the church empty over the years. The Shaw church became incompatible with the neighborhood. They turned their backs on the neighborhood. It was only when the white church got into trouble and could not pay their bills, then they tried to reach out to the neighborhood, but only on Shaw’s terms.

They did not want to open the doors so that kids could use the restrooms. Not only controlling, but they were very selfish. In every meeting the writer had with them someone was always accusing the black church of doing something in their church. They did not want the black church members to park on the parking lot, and to top it off, the white church had twelve members, and the twelve began to dwindle down to four to five.

They wanted to control the times the new church started. They did not like it when the new church was there for meetings during the week. In reality they only wanted the writer to save their church according to their rules. The writer learned, by serving this church, how to identify control issues.

Another experience of control that the writer experienced was in the second appointment. This church was an older African American UMC. The church was set in their ways. The controlling came from one man. He had been in the church since a little boy. Before the writer got appointed, past pastors warned the writer about this person,

and how he could get people to follow him. He wanted the church to remain the same. For example, he did not want the church to advance in worship, bible studies, and church activities. He wanted everything in the worship experience to reflect his understanding of worship. Even though the young people wanted to change, he was not willing to change.

The young people and some adults fell off because they did not have a say in anything. The writer later discovered that all ideas to reach new people or existing members were voted down. This person controlled the music, the ministries, and the administration of the church. This church still operated as if it were in the 1960s with music, and with order of service

The writer made suggestions that would help the church to reach the community, and most of the congregation really liked the plans, but the writer did not get the support. All of the administrative council were under this one person's thumb. The writer began to have workshops to express the infra-structure of the United Methodist Church thinking this will help free up the congregation, but to no avail.

The researcher began to explain to the congregation that the church has voice, only to hear later that this person, we shall name him Mr. X the church would remind the writer that Mr. X always handles that situation. Mr. X always make decisions for the church without consulting with the pastor. He had total control over the choirs, administrative council, and the finance team. Nothing could be said or done without Mr. X's opinion or input. If the congregation had a question, they would call Mr. X. This type of behavior has a name.

This behavior is known as ersatz. Ersatz implies an imitation or substitute of the real thing. In other words, Mr. X was the substitute pastor, which caused him to fight

with every pastor that served that church. After the writer's fourth year at this church, finally the writer begin to see a breakthrough. The congregation did not realize that they had voice and a right to exercise their concerns.

The author learned how to diffuse the controlling power from the so called church leaders, and keep composure at the same time. Using 2 Timothy 4:2. This scripture taught the writer how to teach, rebuke, correct, with patience. This particular scripture taught the writer how to design sermons around the issues of control.

As the writer continued to grow the writer has discovered through workshops, and using materials, such as Strength Finder and the personal discernment inventory profile, they have helped in the writer's professional growth. The writer has discovered while serving the church, the writer has a strong desire to turn troubled, controlling churches around from toxic to becoming vibrant and healthy. All of the writer's appointments have been churches that needed to be turned around.

The writer served on the district committee on ordained ministry for a number of years. The objective on the board was to point out the candidate's weaknesses and provide guidance on other issues, such as control, dominance, and self-denial. The opportunity to serve on the district board of ordained ministry gave the writer experience to recognize the issues that many leaders, pastors carry into the pulpit and that sometimes go unnoticed. The writer's educational and professional experiences has taught the writer how to recognize and dismantle the issue of control.

As the writer looks back over his life experiences, wrestling with issues of control, now the writer can understand God's purpose for surrounding the writer with

people who have unhealthy power and control issues, and how God is preparing the writer for ministry that will address issues of control in the church.

The researcher has certainly had a fair share of experiencing issues of control. The writer remembers the dominant issue of control first with family members such as the writer's grandfather. The grandfather controlled his sons and wife as if they could not decide for themselves. Having experienced being controlled by someone as a teenager, and trying to understand it, was confusing.

The author's father abused the writer to no end. The writer remembers not being able to make decisions. The writer was not allowed to experience dreams or his aspirations. It was the father's way of life and nothing else was accepted. The father's controlling spirit made the writer fear the father and the writer dared not step out of the boundaries that the father put in place. The writer's family never got the chance to feel the freedom to speak or live a normal life. The father's controlling ways caused the author to experience a loss of connectedness with family members.

The writer developed a low self-esteem and lost confidence at a very early age because the grandfather controlled the father and the father was verbally and mentally abusive to his family. The writer's low self-esteem eventually led the writer to lead a life of control. As the writer got older the writer had no desire to bond with anyone, it had to be the writer's way or the highway. The author grew up in a dysfunctional family and the author thought this was normal, the man always in control. No one dared to question the father or challenge his authority. Later the writer began to do to the writer's family what was done to the writer. The writer found a temporary fix that would allow the writer to

control. The writer felt that alcohol was one way to hide the scars and to control the pain as an adolescent, young adult, and into the writer's adult life.

The writer began controlling people that were close to the writer, such as the writer's wife. The writer controlled the marriage to no end. The writer manipulated the relationship so that it would fit the writer's needs and not the wife. The writer controlled what was watched on television, picking movies, and what was done for leisure. No one had a say in the writer's house.

As the writer began to seek God's Kingdom and his righteousness God, through the Holy Spirit, gave the writer's strength to know who the writer was and whose the writer belong to. This was the beginning of the writer's breakthrough.

In the writer's current appointment, the writer noticed early in their history the founders of St. Andrew decided to start a church for themselves in 1922. They didn't like what was going on in Centennial United Methodist Church. They wanted to be in control, and so they started a church for themselves.

A scripture that comes to mind is Genesis 11:1-4, the tower of Babel:

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make brick and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole Earth."¹

We know that God instructed Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful and multiply. They were told to build horizontally, not vertically. That mission that God mandated to them never changed. When the church seeks to make a name for herself by

¹ Genesis 11:1-4, New International Version. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references end this document are from the NIV.

building upward the church can't reach anybody, but when we build out we touch, embrace, and invite everybody as God intended.

It is apparent that St Andrew parallels with this text. It has become evident that there are control issues that have followed the church from its inception, and it still operates under this spirit now.

Over the years or two serving St. Andrew, the writer has noticed people in the church wanting to serve the church but feeling threatened not to serve because of the cliques, the old guard, and the older members in the congregation. Their motto is "keep it the same." That is control. The scripture reads "Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins" (Matt. 9:17). In that case I do not want to put new members into old ministries that are not working, or old out dated systems.

In the writer's early years, the new members in the new church felt that they did not have a voice in the church ministries or decision making when it involved worship. The writer knows exactly how that feels, being controlled and controlling, the writer has been on both ends of the spectrum.

Because of the writer's experiences in the writer's spiritual autobiography and professional education, being under and in control, and along with prior contextual experiences, the writer is able to speak to the laity, pastor's and ministry leaders about control issues. The project model that the writer will propose will address the control issues in the church, as well as the individual.

This project will help people to identify issues of control in their lives and in the life of the church and give them tools to create healthy relationships, and experience unity in the church.

Control ushers in division, and division is not just in the church, but division is also in the homes. But unhealthy control that causes division does not stay in the home, it moves into the workplace, and onto the playground, and then into the sports arena, and then unhealthy control slips into the church. Unhealthy control walks right past the greeters, introduces his or herself to the ushers, demands to sit where they want to sit, refuses to participate in worship, and quickly ducks out when it is time to give an offering.

Issues of control have many roots to consider such as not wanting to delegate, weak leadership, having to do everything, being insecure, and having low self-esteem. These are just a few triggers that can point to someone with issues of control. These triggers seem to point to the members and some of the leaders of St. Andrew. But St. Andrew is not the only church that struggles with these control triggers. It seems to have appeared in all of the churches that the author served over the years. These control triggers seem to be obvious throughout the author's experience in ministry.

Control is also a problem in the church, such as worship wars. What songs are being chosen? Worship wars are fights to control what happens on Sunday morning such as too many contemporary songs, and not enough traditional songs.

Control is also found in the church board rooms, not wanting to follow the administrative guidelines. Things such as the treasurer controlling the checkbook, young people verses older people, and pastors wanting to do it all.

- This project will attempt to first answer the question and define what is control?
- This project will identify the nature or the driving force behind the issues of control.

- The project will expose and name the symptoms behind control.
- We will take a look at how control can destroy the church.
- The project will expose and demonstrate how leaders have misused their power of control.
- We will discover ways of learning to let go of unhealthy control.
- The project will invite the church to look at issues of control through the lens of the bible. What does the bible say about control? How our history exposes unhealthy power and control
- How we can come back and heal from the spirit of unhealthy power and control?
- Expose what unhealthy control looks like and what healthy control looks like.
- Look at strong models of accountability and leadership structure.

Control issues can stem from different personalities and cliques. There is always an underlying reason for control. For example, black churches that experience control stems back as far as the great migration.

According to Anthony B. Pinn, “the Northern black church having gained some measure of acceptance and success, black churches and their leaders by and large did not want their progress hampered by new membership that reminded them and the larger white society of blacks during slavery, who were stereotyped as ignorant, backward, and culturally insignificant.”² The Northern churches wanted to maintain their control; their power to not become like the Southern churches. When the South migrated to the North,

² Anthony B. Pinn, *The Black Church in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 9.

the Northern congregational leaders didn't want the Southern congregations bringing their southerner thinking, speaking Uncle Tom habits into the northern churches.

That kind of practice is still going on in the churches today. Leaders do not let outsiders into the church because they do not look like them, they have a different background. Their education and where they live, keeps them from being welcomed and appreciated in the church. They experience the church is being run like a clique, and they are never asked to do anything, so they sit on the pews, or stop coming.

This project will look at the early church in 1 Corinthians 1:1-10 because we know that people will follow cliques, groups, and families. This project will address the family oriented churches to look at themselves and how they can play a positive role in dismantling control, or how families with control issues will tear the church down and run off guests and members, but learn how to walk in God's grace together

This project will help those who are under the spirit of control. Control affects the church, family, children, and outside relationships. Control can leave scars that can affect the psychological status of a person.

Therefore, the writer hopes that this project will help others to see how control, going unnoticed, can destroy the church, and how a strong leadership that points to accountability is the key for minimizing and managing issues that point to unhealthy power and control in the local church. The author also hopes that others will learn from this project on how to let go of control. Some people like being in control, and being in control means being in charge. Therefore, it is the author's intention that this project will cause pastors and church leaders to create space for new members as well as guests, to

become potential disciples, and create opportunities for those who are not serving to serve and to help build God's kingdom.

The author hopes that this project will help the church, and the leaders to be able to spot the genesis of control in other ministries, and how control comes into the church, the home, and on the job. It is the writer's goal that this project will provide spiritual healing, through counseling, training, and workshops. It is the author's intention that this project will open up opportunities for communication to take place between leaders, potential leaders, pastors and those gatekeepers who keep the church on lockdown from the community.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The purpose of this paper is to provide an exegetical analysis of both the Old Testament (OT), Gen. 11:1-9, and John 18:1; 19:7-11 in the New Testament (NT). The exegetical goal of this paper will first expose the book of Genesis' wider theme of Israel's disobedience toward YHWH, and then the paper will concentrate specifically on the pericope of Gen. 11:1-9 revealing Israel's relentless behavior and constant rebellious attitude, as they displayed a sinful nature of unhealthy power and control against YHWH's vision for humanity.

Through the exegesis process of Gen. 11:1-9, the writer will demonstrate how YHWH will react with sovereign power over Israel's compulsion and uncontrollable need to step over YHWH's boundaries for their own power and control, eventually causing YHWH to come down from the throne room in heaven to stop the Babel project.

The writer of this paper will expose Israel's disobedience to YHWH's intent to repopulate the world. Israel's disobedience has been a driving force to usurp YHWH's plan for humanity ever since the fall, thus causing YHWH to destroy the creation through water. But after the flood, it was a new age and new blessings for Israel to get it right with YHWH.

In Gen. 11 Israel began to rebuild cities, and they decided to build a tower within the city to reach YHWH. But God thwarted their attempt by confusing their tongue and scattering them (11:7-8). As we transition from the OT and move towards the NT, the paper will reveal the same kind of problem with unhealthy power and control, and the misuse of authority.

The first part of this section, Gen. 11:1-9, will show the historical background, the history around the text. It will also flesh out the kind of literature the writer used - narrative, form, literary, and canonical content will be observed.

The second part of this paper will focus on the NT Gospel of John 18:1; 19:7-11. The exegesis will demonstrate God's power over Rome's corrupt leadership, and over Pilate's so-called power that he claimed to have over Jesus. John 18:1; 19:7-11 will provide an exegetical framework that will show that when Jesus stood before the Roman governor Pilate for sentencing, YHWH was still in control over life and death situations.

The exegetical analysis will also demonstrate how Pilate, the chief priests, Caiaphas, and the Jews used their limited unhealthy power and control on Jesus. This would only serve to reveal YHWH's power and purpose for Israel. Again, YHWH will demonstrate his sovereignty through his omnipresence and omnipotence, showing his authority and complete ultimate power and control over all of humanity.

Through the synergy paper, the writer was made aware of the progression of humanity's zeal for making a name for themselves by using unhealthy power and control, as both continue to exist in our world today. The second part of the paper (John 18:1; 19:7-11) will walk through the literary criticism, form structure, and canonical criticisms and expose the historical content in the text.

The exegesis will provide a practicum for leaders to see unhealthy power and control through the texts and other scriptures as they are related to control in churches today. The paper will then end with a summary of both parts one and two texts and will demonstrate how both of these texts will support the proposed DMin. project.

Old Testament

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they come upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth (Gen. 11:1-9, NRSV).

The Babel story is seen as the end of the great narratives according to the material centered on the Yahwistic primeval history account. Older content from the Babel narrative has been extracted from the story. It has been woven into the Yahwistic history. The material is not so much in detail, but it is understood and seen in its primary thoughts.

Chapter 11 does not parallel with the table of nations with the understanding of Noah's house spreading out into multiply nations. It believes that the uniformity of humanity will happen, but one cannot come to a literary conclusion from the behavior that this will actually take place. A good example is drawn from the secondary source

and contributed to the (J) writers. The J source has connected single traditions with primeval history, and the results of this merger has drawn attention to the inner theological understanding of the whole rather than to the accurate balance of the details in the Babel story.¹

It is understood that they wandered, Israel, but it is not said from where they wandered. Having found a place, it tempted them to become stagnant and to not do what was required of them. In the chapter ahead there are no connections that would indicate that these two chapters were linked together.

This beginning demonstrates how people come together. During the migration, large groups of people find themselves on the move. They moved out from one setting, the flood, and into another setting, ending up in a culture of power. This settling down was different from before, this time they wanted fame and strong partnership between themselves and only themselves. They soon began to design and build the great tower.²

As the erection of the tower began to take shape, so did their egos. The construction was a visible sign of their courage and efforts toward their fame and glory. The architectural design of the tower was intended to reach the place where God lives. But what that meant was that the tower was to be at a certain height (Deut. 1:28). Von Rad sees the building of the tower as a separation from God:

The epilogue to the Yahwistic primeval history. The story about building of the Babylonian tower is generally seen as the keystone to the Yahwistic primeval history. So

¹ Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1972), 148.

² Von Rad, *Genesis*, 148.

we must look back briefly over the way along which this narrator has brought us. But this deliberation is all the more important because the Yahwistic outline has given to the canonical primeval history the character that was later combined with the Priestly document. The Yahwistic narrator has told the story of God and man from the time mankind began, and the story is characterized on the human side by an increase in sin to avalanche proportions.

The sins of Adam and Eve, Cain, Lamech, the angel marriages, the Tower of Babel these are stages along that way which has separated man farther and farther from God. This succession of narratives, therefore, points out a continually widening chasm between man and God. But God reacts to these outbreaks of human sin with severe judgment.

The punishment of Adam and Eve was severe; severer still was Cain's. Then followed the Flood, and the final judgement was the Dispersion, the dissolution of mankind's unity. Thus at the end of the primeval history a difficult question comes up, God's future relationship to his rebellious humanity, which is now scattered in fragments. Is the catastrophe of chapter 11:1-9 the end? ³

In Gen. 1-11 the information is structured to be theological but at the same time it is understood to be challenging. The chapters in their canonical form operate to present the concrete way of demonstrating the historical materials of the OT. In these chapters we see both a theological presence of the history of the universe, and a cosmic understanding at the same time.

³ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 152.

These two viewpoints describe Israel's environment and also reveal Israel's faith and life as it is to be understood. Two challenges are noteworthy to mention. First scholars believe that the material was obtained by Israel from an older and better developed culture. "These texts, moreover, have been formed, used, and transmitted in the great cultic centers of major political powers."⁴ These texts have been recognized as myths, but the usage of the language does not mean that the story does not exist, or that it never happened. In fact, some of the stories are "aetiologies, that is, stories told in order to explain the cause or origin of something extant [existing] in culture (see Gen. 4:17 – 25; 9:18-28)."⁵ Joseph Campbell frames it as poetic narratives that give the basic knowledge of a community.⁶

The second point that Brueggemann makes about these texts is that scholars, such as Julius Wellhausen, have pointed to the Pentateuchal background work, and have revealed many strands of evidence of tradition that their studies point to the (P) Priestly and Yahwistic writers. These writers write in two different ways when revealing the material, and these two forms of theological thoughts are kept at a distance. Nevertheless, the materials in the narratives are valuable and are understood to be well documented, being derived from a number of sources.⁷

Primary accent in theological interpretation has been placed especially upon the creation text of Gen. 1:1-2, 4a and Gen. 2:4b-25 with its related narratives in 3:1-24, the narrative of Cain and Abel (4:1-16), the great flood narrative (6:5 – 9:17),

⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 29.

⁵ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 31.

⁶ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 30.

⁷ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 30.

and the account of the tower of Babel (11:1-9). Each of these narratives reflects older ancient Near Eastern tradition, so that it is impossible to ask questions about “historicity.” Rather, these materials may be better understood as complex, artistic attempts to articulate the most elemental presuppositions of life and faith in Israel, attempts that understood the world in a Yahwistic way. The end result of interpretation process is a text that provided an imaginative context for the emergence of Israel in the midst of older culture claims, vision and affirmation.⁸

Genesis gives an account of the God of Israel, the Yahwist identified God as YHWH. Yahwistic (J source) writers in the creation narrative demonstrate how YHWH disciplines humanity’s rebellious attitude beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden (the fall), Cain and Able, the flood, and the tower of Babel. As Israel makes every attempt to usurp God’s plan for humanity, YHWH steps into history, punishes humanity and restores creation to the original plan, from chaos to divine order. YHWH was determined to have his way. After the flood, it is YHWH’s purpose to reconstruct Israel, so the Yahwistic writers (J source) demonstrate YHWH’s plan to challenge and discipline Israel’s behavior.

In Gen. 11:1-9 the men decided to build a tower in the city of Shinar. The tower of Babel meant the Gate of God. The remains of large towers, called ziggurats, can be found at the sites of many ancient cities in Mesopotamia. These sacred temple- towers were built in step-like stages of brick and asphalt, usually with a shrine at the top. The Tower of Babel was not viewed as a temple-tower but simply a tower, and was thought to be the first one ever attempted. The ziggurats may have been duplicates of this tower.”⁹

⁸ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 31.

⁹ J.D. Douglas, ed., *New International Bible Dictionary: Based on the NIV* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 116.

The city and the tower were a double prideful resistance against God. The tower was a project to honor and to promote themselves. Also, their plans to set up homestead indicated a direct disobedience towards God to not inhabit the whole earth as God had intended them to do in the beginning.

God's idea was to repopulate the earth with caretakers, and so God acted out on their disobedience. After they had decided to live in that land, God forced them to scatter. Their cooperation and self-reliance had been based on their shared language. From the beginning, instead of using all of their resources to obey God, they misused them for disobedience. God chose to complicate communication by multiplying the languages.

The place where this confusion took place became known as Babel (related to the Hebrew word meaning "to confuse"). Later it became Babylon, the constant enemy of God's people, and throughout scripture the pinnacle of humanity's rebellious acts against God. (Rev. 16:19; 17:5).¹⁰

The Yahwistic writer made it clear that Israel did not stop sinning after the flood. Humanity still disobeyed YHWH with their pride and self-centeredness. Lawrence Boadt points out that "The key symbol of this idolatrous faith for the Yahwist was the huge ziggurat, or temple tower, sometimes rising two hundred feet or more, the Babylonians regularly raised to their gods. J delighted in showing God's punishment of such human pride. The nations are so scattered and so closed off by scrambled language that they will never cooperate with one another, much less challenge God. One of the

¹⁰ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Handbook: A Book-by-Book Exploration of God's Word* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 16.

ironies in the story of Babel is that while people thought the tower was so grand, God found it so puny that he had to come down to earth just to make out what it was. To mock Babylon even more.¹¹

Scholars believe that the Babel narrative is closely connected to, and grounded in the pre-history of creation. Humanity's disobedience towards God connects the fall of man to the tower of Babel. In the face of humanity's rebellion, God still holds persons accountable, but it is God's grace that is extended out to rescue humanity from self-destruction.

The creation story seems to reveal unhealthy power and control. It starts from the Garden with Adam and Eve disobeying God. In Gen. 3:1ff after the man and woman demonstrate their inability to follow God's instruction in the garden, God still held them accountable for their actions such as eating from the tree of life, wanting to be like God, and knowing good from evil.

In Gen. 4:1ff, Cain commits the first murder. In Gen. 6-8 the (J) writer shows how humanity decided to fall away from the relationship with God and sin against God again. In Gen. 7 God extends grace to Noah, and in Gen. 11:1-9 humanity failed again to carry out God's instructions by building a tower to reach the heavens. These ancestral narratives show a glaring theme of humanity's continuous nature to rebel against God.

¹¹ Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament an Introduction* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1984), 128-129.

Brueggeman points out that Gen. 10 points to Gen. 11. The vast numbers of people occupied the creation and now they are leaning towards the tower of Babel.¹²

The form, or the genre, of Gen. 11:1-9 is understood as a narrative. The exegetical form will show how the text moves from one point to another. The Genesis story is about humans who decided to settle down and build a tower. This narrative is easily distinguished from the material before and after it, in that both cases are genealogies. However, scholars do raise the question as to how they connected to the tower narrative; the moves will expose that a little later in the text.

Genesis 11:1 and Gen. 11:9 frame the story and repeat many of the same words, while showing the progression of the story. “The entire world had only one language and all spoke the same words,” (Gen. 11:1) and as the story progresses “the Lord confused the language of all the earth . . . the Lord scattered them abroad” (Gen. 11:9).

Looking at the parallels between vss. 1 and 9, other parallels also come as illustrated in the diagram below:

- A. Vs 1- whole earth..... one language
- B. Vs 2- they came Settled there
- C. Vs 3- said, “Come let us make bricks....”
- D. Vs 4- They said, “Come let us build..... Otherwise we will be scattered
- E. Vs 5- Lord came down to see
- D. Vs 6- they are one people and they have one language
- C. Vs 7- Come, let us go down and confuse their language
- B. Vs 8- So the Lord scattered them
- A. Vs 9 Lord confused the language of all the earth

Observing the organization of the text, it turns at verse 5 where the Lord comes down to see. The first part of the text (vss. 1 – 4) involves the human characters who purpose among themselves (Come let us). The humans plan a building project for two purposes: to make a name for themselves and so they will not be scattered. The text pivots on verse 5 where God comes down to see what humans have been about. This verse in the text moves. The second part of the text concerns God and the divine council (“us”) who also plan (come let us). God and

¹² Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*; Genesis (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 94.

humans never interact directly in the text. God's plans undo the plans of humans and at the end what the humans hope to avoid (scattering) is what God imposes upon them by confusing their language. We are left to wonder why? – Why did God not allow the humans to settle down as they hoped?¹³

The next change in the narrative (vs. 5) goes in a different direction. God “comes down” to see what the humans have been about. The action of this narrative here shifts from earth to heaven, from humans to God so this verse, where God “comes down,” this is where the text turns. We now move to God and God's reaction to what humans have purposed. There is a noticeable humor about the next change about the text. It changes from humans to God. The humans were constructing a tower with its top in the direction of the heavens from their point of view, but in order for God to see it, God will have to come down from heaven to see it. What was so big to humans was not so significant from God's point of view!

Part II (vss. 6-9) – the second part of this text is set in the divine council, in the realm of the gods over which Yahweh presides. God sees that humanity's dreams and cleverness are endless (vs.6), so that eagerness invites God to jump into humanity's time. Heaven's council decides to see the project behind the words “Come let us.”

Not only does God hear these words but God suspends the work. (“come let us” in vss. 3-4). God makes it so they cannot understand each other. God confuses and the very thing they did not want to happen, happened and that was being divided (vs. 4) – over the entire world.

¹³ John Bracke, “Imagining the World: A Guide for Reading Biblical Texts” (lecture, Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO, September, 2007).

One can see the harmony in this story in both structure and sense. Humans wanted to settle down for fear of being scattered. It seems like the right thing to do, so they stopped to settle down. Their not being able to understand themselves caused them to scattered. How does one understand this story? Is it about a God who is intolerant over his boundaries? Is this another side of God that demands your trust in him?

“Scatter” is an important word in Gen. 11 that humans tried to avoid (v4) but God’s punishment will still go down. (vss. 8-9). At the end of Gen. 10 scatter is used v 32. The word spread abroad is identified with scatter on earth. Gen. 10 concerns the aftermath of the flood. These word abroad and scattered is in relationship with Adam and Eve, God gave the order to be fruitful and multiply (1: 26-28). Now after the flood God gives the order to Noah’s sons “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen 9:1).

The thought is that humans are to be in relationship with God, humans are employed by God and created in the image of God and to spread all through the earth. In the context of the charge in Gen. 9:1, Gen. 10 seems to suggest that Noah’s sons were doing just as God intended for the sake of God’s creation: spreading abroad.

Genesis 11 supports Genesis 10 in a peculiar way. In Genesis 10 humans were already speaking in different languages 10:5, 20 and were already scattered 10:32. Genesis 11 shows this mental picture that the scattering that had been seen in the prior chapter explains how Gen. 11 seems to explain how Gen. 10 came about at the demand from God for God’s sake and for the sake of the world.

God was very successful having done what God set out to do, but a cost is involved. Humans cannot understand one another’s conversation. Interestingly, Abraham and Sarah in Gen. 12:1-3 are seen to be opposite to the Babel story builders. When told to

go, they head out not knowing where they are going, but they go because they are God's agents of blessing. Instead of making a name for themselves, they go out in the strength that God will make their name great.

The Yahwistic writers are in conversation with the Babel story and with King David and Solomon. Current scholars believe the Yahwistic writers may have come on the set a little later but still showed a time of prosperity and security in the life of Judah (perhaps the 7th or 6th century).

In great wealth and stability this story may well reflect humans having a desire to act on their own and choose their own security. In other words humans wanted to do it their way. God's vocational intention for humans was that they would serve the cause of God's creation: to spread abroad through the creation as God's agents of blessing and co-laborers with God.

Genesis 11 sees the world under the watchful eye of its creator. God intends a better world for all of creation and humans are charged by God to be the caretakers of it, God's agents seeing and taking care of the world. But there is a problem: humans want to settle down and live in ways that are secure, protected, and self-serving ("make a name for ourselves"). One way the text views the world is in tension around the human vocation in God's service for the sake of the whole creation.

A second way Gen. 11 sees the world is in the experience of chaos where humans no longer understand one another's speech. This text plays this dynamic out in its contribution to humans spreading abroad. However, the long stretch over the years of human history has taught us of the negative experiences of human separation from God. This is proven through wars that never end, and not to speak of our daily experiences of

interpersonal alienation from family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers when we don't understand one another. Biblically, the story of Pentecost in Acts 2 is offered as God's healing of the alienation in Gen. 11.¹⁴

While the study of the Old Testament has been largely a historical enterprise for the last several centuries, only recently has the Old Testament study been freshly addressed under the rubric of *cannon*, an approach that offers something of an alternative to study under the rubric of "history." The term "canon" attests that literature of the bible functions as normative and regulative for a community. In the Old Testament the term refers to the list of books that came to constitute the scripture corpus of literature for both Jewish and Christian communities of faith.¹⁵

The five books of Moses, otherwise known as the Torah, are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In the Jewish and Christian school of thought these books are regarded highly for scriptural authority. During the time of Ezra it is a possibility that these books were in their finished form around the time of the second century B. C. E.

The tower of Babel text has strong canonical connections to other stories in which humanity struggles with unhealthy power and control, and the abuse of power. Such texts include Exodus. 1:8-11; Proverbs. 28:28; Judges. 6:2; Job 21:7; Proverbs. 28:12; Ecclesiastes. 4:1; Jeremiah. 5:27-28; 23:10; Ezekiel. 22:6; and Micha. 2:1; 7:3. In the NT, the religious groups such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Sanhedrin and the high priests and of course, Pilate and the Roman government, all sought to have unhealthy power, and they abused their use of power and control in contradiction to God's plan for humanity.

¹⁴ Bracke, "Imagining the World."

¹⁵ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 4-5.

Unhealthy power and control is found throughout the entire bible from Genesis to Revelation. God has revealed humanity's uncontrollable desire to misuse power and have control.

New Testament

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him in the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him: I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus, gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above: therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilt of a greater sin." (John 18:1; 19:1-11).

The fourth evangelist's writing is a narrative consisting of many parts based on the life of Jesus. The biography is not to be understood to be complete; the incompleteness is proven through the chronological holes. The Gospel of John is not a synoptic Gospel. It has some similarities, but also a lot of differences such as Jesus' origins being tied to God and the story of creation, Jesus identifies himself publicly, many acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God, "and, at the end, the narrator explains why he has written the Gospel."¹⁶

¹⁶ David Rhoads, *The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 118.

The text actually begins over in John 18:1 where Jesus is found in the garden and then arrested, but Jesus does not put up a fight with the so-called powers at hand. Jesus is ready to go willingly as his accusers make their way to confront him. Those who arrested Jesus thought that they had power over Jesus, but Jesus goes quietly as they escort him away.

The arrest led Jesus to stand before the high priests. Caiaphas and Annas are both seen as high priests, but first Jesus is questioned by Annas, and later taken to stand before Caiaphas. Jesus is taken from Annas to Caiaphas, then later to Pilate. The confusion about the many who are called high priests is mainly because of the Greek word “archiereus.” This word can be used in the plural to point out “leading priests.” Examples can be found in (Mark 14:1, 10, 43, 53, and 55). But there is still a bit of confusion.

In John 11:49 Caiaphas is seen as the high priest “in that year.” However, as odd as this sounds, the high priest was not an annual office. After Jesus is taken to Caiaphas for a formal trial, there is no mention of a conversation between Caiaphas and Jesus.

This informal trial moves Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas, then the plot drops off and goes into the story of Peter’s denial and his being questioned about knowing Jesus and being one of his disciples. The plot of Jesus’ trial picks back up with Caiaphas leading Jesus to Pilate for sentencing.¹⁷ Sin started in the Garden of Eden and now sin has found its way back into the Garden with the arrest of Jesus. But at the same time God

¹⁷ James L. Mays et al eds., *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 1072.

is demonstrating his divine power over the soldiers by allowing the disciples to go without harming them.¹⁸

John's gospel has been a part of the NT from ancient times. Pieces of this gospel exposed by the Rylands became widespread during the first third of the second century. And the conclusion was confirmed in the Egerton papyrus. Other lists of works, like the Muratorian Canon, that was not entirely completed, included John and spoke about its beginnings and tradition starting in the second century.

Tatian, a pupil of Justin Martyr who alluded to the "Memoirs of the Apostles" (First Apology 67), incorporated sections from it in his Diatessaron, a combined narrative of the four gospels, which was widely used in the Syrian church in the second, third, and fourth centuries. Heracleon, a Gnostic, wrote a commentary on the Gospel about 170. He would have scarcely have written a commentary on what he did not consider to be an authoritative work, though his personal beliefs were unorthodox. The Bodmer papyri of the early third century contain parts of two copies of this Gospel. The Fathers of the late second century Irenaeus, Clement, of Alexandria, and Tertullian all accept it as authoritative. By the middle of the third century its place in the canon was fixed. Origen (c. 250) wrote an extensive commentary on it, and the subsequent church councils that had anything to say about the canon all recognized its authority. Eusebius, the church historian of the fourth century, classified the canon by (1) the acknowledged books (2) the disputed books, and (3) the spurious works. John was classed among the undisputed works. Its canonicity was above question.¹⁹

The gospel of John, which was the last gospel in the canonical gospels, was most likely written around the first century 90- 100 C.E. Scholars believe that the gospel was written somewhere in the area of Alexandria in Egypt, Palestine, Antioch of Syria, or

¹⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 1012.

¹⁹ Frank E. Gaebelin et al eds., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of The Holy Bible*, vol. 9, *John-Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 18-19.

Asia Minor. Most likely, Asia Minor is the most favorable location for this document to have been written; a strong possibility it was in the city of Ephesus.

The *Global Bible Commentary* believes that John's gospel was written around 75-80 C.E. This document was written after the fall of Jerusalem and the temple. Without a temple, the Jews were looking to revise their identity about this time. This process of searching for identity would eliminate anyone who did not agree or become like them, Jewish Christians as well.

This rejection is found in John 9:22; 12:42; and 16:2. At the time the Jewish community was being redefined and making new adjustments with their identity. The Christian community was also in the process of rediscovering and renovating their identity. These two religions were rebuilding their religious beliefs at the same time but they were building it independently from each other. Each had its own agenda and beliefs about God. Not only were they building with separate views about their different religiosities, they were building and redefining their beliefs in a Hellenistic world that was ruled by the Roman Empire, and one that was responsible for a Palestinian way of acting out in a rebellious way, as well as leading to the demise of Jerusalem.

In the contextual analysis of the Gospel of John, when one looks at themes from a Korean's view, the *Global Bible Commentary* points out that by "Looking at John's use of language in comparison with mantras recited by Buddhist monks helps us to ponder its religious function for the community."²⁰ One theme that jumps out is when Jesus steps into a conversation with his listeners, his way of communication becomes mysterious.

²⁰ Daniel Patte et al eds., *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 402.

Another major theme is that “A radical wall of separation exists between the divine world and the human world, and between the Johannine community and the outsiders, especially “the Jews.”²¹ “The Gospel of John does not record any information that would suggest that the Sanhedrin had no formal trial when Jesus stood before them, instead it was in the form of a police interrogation by Annas’ father-in-law, the high priest.

The Gospel of John tries to retain Jesus’ trial in a noticeable traditional way, but in order to achieve that, Annas and Caiaphas are seen together in Jesus’ trial in their historical context. Annas served as high priest from 6 to 15 c.e. but when his term ended his rule did not. Caiaphas was high priest from 18 to 36 c.e. and Annas’ sons and grandson succeeded him as high priest.

Against this tradition – historical background, the interpreter may then ask: (1) why does the Fourth Evangelist omit any account of a Sanhedrin trial? And (2) why does he showcase the informal meeting before Annas? The Fourth Evangelist’s acknowledgment of a meeting before the high priest may have been necessitated by tradition, but to narrate it more fully would have served no dramatic or theological purpose in the Fourth Gospel narrative. Jesus’ formal legal relationship with the Jewish authorities had been concluded at (11:47-53). The Sanhedrin had already met and passed death sentence against Jesus at (11:53). Moreover, not only the death sentence already had been passed, but also Jesus’ formal questioning by the Jewish had been incorporated into the narration of Jesus’ ministry (5:16-18; 10:2-39). The dramatic focus of John 18-19 therefore, shifts to the trial before Pilate.²²

Now the accused, Jesus the Christ, is led by the high priest Caiaphas to answer to Pilate the Roman governor for sentencing (John 18:24). Because the trial is early in the

²¹ Patte, *Global Bible Commentary*, 402.

²² Leander E. Keck et al eds., *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 9, *Luke-John* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 806.

morning, the Jews didn't want to break their ceremonial traditions. It was the Jewish custom not to defile the palace by entering it with its uncleanness, and to be able to take the Passover.

So the Jewish leaders didn't go into the palace, the trial took place outside the palace because of their ceremonial religious laws to partake of the Passover that was scheduled to take place later that evening. Therefore, Pilate stepped outside the palace to question the Jews about Jesus.

The first episode in the trial takes place outside the praetorium. Pilate examines the accused and his accusers. V.28 So that they might not be defiled. The irony of the Jewish scruples is highlighted by John. They were already defiled in their hearts by their plot to kill Jesus. V 29 what accusation . . . ? To this reasonable question the accusers give an answer which both evades the issues and reveals their insolence. V.31 it is not lawful for us to put any man to death. The Sanhedrin had power to condemn a man to death, but were required to obtain the sanction of the Roman authorities. 32 It is implied that, since Jesus had predicted death by crucifixion, events were overruled in the fulfilment of the prediction.²³

There are seven scenes in which Pilate's involvement is seen in his line of questioning Jesus. Pilate is moving in and out of the palace. The questioning begins outside of Pilate's headquarters. Pilate questioned the Jews about Jesus. In turn Pilate finds no reason to carry out the Jews' request to kill Jesus, so he sends Jesus back to the Jews for them to do with him as they saw fit. Seven times Pilate goes back and forth or in and out of his chambers.

- Scene 1(18:29-32) outside Pilate, "the Jews"
- Scene 2(18:33-38a) inside Pilate and Jesus
- Scene 3(18:38b-40) outside Pilate and "the Jews"
- Scene 4(19:1-3) inside Jesus and the soldiers
- Scene 5(19:4-7) outside Pilate, and Jesus, and "the Jews"
- Scene 6(19:8-12) inside Pilate, Jesus, (and "the Jews")

²³ D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, eds., *The New Bible Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 963.

Scene 7(19:13-16a) Outside Pilate, Jesus, and “the Jews” ²⁴

The outline points to Pilate going back and forth, inside his headquarters and then outside his headquarters. It seems as though the mighty powerful Pilate is confused and doesn’t know what to do, and he is very nervous about condemning Jesus. So it is hard for Pilate to make a decision based on the lack of evidence given to him by the Jews.

The seven stages depict Jesus is on the inside and the Jews are on the outside. This going in and out of Pilate’s headquarters strips him of his so-called power and control over Jesus, and shows his perplexed state of mind. “The division into seven scenes is almost universally recognized and accepted by Johannine scholars. The only major exception is Bultmann, who grouped 19:1-7 as one scene and thus only had six scenes in the trial.”²⁵

Nonetheless, the text demonstrates how Pilate began to lobby Jesus back and forth because of his uncertainty about the charges made on Jesus. The Johannine scholars show Pilate’s being unstable and struggling to make a firm stance on the matter. One could even say that Pilate’s heart was not supportive with the Jews’ decision in bringing Jesus to him for questioning and sentencing Jesus to death.

“Pilate went out to them; 18:33:”Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, this split stage robs Pilate of any narrative stability and thereby calls into question his authority as judge. Second, even when dramatic focus is on Pilate and Jesus inside the headquarters, the offstage presence of “the Jews” reminds the reader of what is at stake in the trial (as with the split stages of John 7). Third, the staging supports the theological movement of the trial. As the trial moves to its conclusion, the boundaries between the two stages become more permeable and “both the personages and places move nearer to each other.” That is, in scene 5, all of the major characters are positioned on the outside stage; in scene 6, the

²⁴ Keck, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, 813.

²⁵ Keck, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, 813.

voice of the “the Jews” penetrates into the inside stage (19:12), and in scene 7, all of the major characters are together outside again.²⁶

Pilate’s line of questioning begins with asking Jesus “Are you King of the Jews?” (18:33), this line of questioning is also seen in the other gospels (Matthew 27:11; and Mark 15:2; and in Luke 23:3). The question “Are you King of the Jews?” seems to be a common language throughout the gospels of Jesus’ interrogation process. The word “King,” *basileus* appears nine times as the trial begins. (18:33, 37 twice 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 15 and also 19:19 and 21) Jesus’ kingship posed a threat to the Jewish sect, and also the kingship presents a problem towards the political Roman structure as well. John’s gospel uses the word Kingship in the political and theological motif all through the trial. John takes these two thoughts and uses one towards the other.

This line of questioning is not new to Jesus, so Jesus answers Pilate’s question with a question, leaving it up to Pilate to make the call for himself. In other words Pilate is left to figure it out for himself. By Jesus answering the question with a question, it offset the movement and other questions throughout the rest of his time before Pilate. Pilate’s position, as the enforcer or as the interviewer, will change in the line of questioning.

From this stage on Jesus will answer Pilate’s questions, but with a different tone and direction. It is obvious that Pilate does not know how to handle Jesus’ answers. When Pilate questioned Jesus about his kingship, Jesus describes his world; it is not the world that Pilate was accustomed to or knew (18:36-38). “Although both the NIV and the NRSV translate (*Basileia*) as ‘kingdom,’ a more accurate translation would be

²⁶ Keck, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, 814.

kingship or perhaps reign. Jesus is describing the nature and the function of his kingship, not a place.”²⁷

The conversation about Jesus being king of the Jews was inside the praetorium, and Jesus was asked, “Are you king of the Jews?” (John 18:33). Pilate most likely meant is this your political stance; are you professing to be the political “king” over the Jews? Jesus’ position on kingship is very different from Pilate’s understanding of kingship.

Pilate needed clarity on Jesus’ position if a conviction was to be made. He needed something more tangible in order to accuse Jesus. Jesus made it clear that his kingship was not of this world. *The New Bible Commentary* points out that, “Kingship in the political sense must be supported by power, but spiritual kingship needs no such aid.”²⁸ Pilate’s difficulty to understand what Jesus is talking about causes Pilate to somewhat agree with Jesus’ statement.

“So you are a king?” which cannot be divorced from scorn. Spiritual realities were unintelligible to him. Jesus leaves Pilate to decide the answer for himself, since it was he who had first used the word king. For this I was born... to bear witness to the truth. This makes transparently clear the spiritual character of the kingship of Jesus. The royalty of the world was not linked to the idea of the truth. Because of this Pilate’s question V38 what is the truth? Is understandable as well as revealing his impatience²⁹

Even though Jesus was accused of political treason by the Jews, Pilate found Jesus not guilty of any kind of political revolt, or of taking over the Roman government.

²⁷ Keck, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, 817.

²⁸ Guthrie, *The New Bible Commentary*, 963.

²⁹ Guthrie, *The New Bible Commentary*, 963.

Nevertheless, the line of answers behind Pilate's questioning were probably too mysterious for Pilate to just leave it alone (John 18:38).

Pilate asked Him, "What is truth?" After he said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him." But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" they shouted in reply, "No not this man, but Barabbas!"

After the request for the release of Barabbas (19:1), Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. Since there was no apparent reason to charge Jesus, perhaps in Pilate's thinking the flogging would show the Jews that Pilate did do something to punish Jesus. Flogging also served as a warning to those passing by; if you get out of line this was the consequence. Flogging was a major weapon used in ancient biblical times. In Acts 22:25 Paul was led to be flogged. In Acts 16: 22-23 the crowds joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten (v23). After they had been severely flogged they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

The Apostles were flogged. For their disobedience to the Sanhedrin's first command the penalty was probably thirty-nine stripes (Acts 5:40). In 2 Cor. 11:24 Paul speaks about his flogging: "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods." Beating with rods was a way that the Romans punished those that stepped outside of Roman rule.

According to *Hermeneia*, a historical commentary, the Jews are the main focus in this section of the story. The Jews are the leading characters. The high priests are seen only in verses 18:35 and 19:6-15. The narrator is silent and is clueless about the hearing with Caiaphas. The location of Pilate's quarters, where he was residing, is a matter of

dispute. Guess work would put the palace, according to Dalman, located near the tower of Antonia. Other interpreters say it was in the Northwestern corner of the upper city.³⁰

The morning hour of this trial has no significant meaning; it was seen as a part of a tradition (Mark 15:1). Verse 28b explains why the Jews remained outside the palace, only because the palace was considered a house of paganism. Jews did not go into pagan houses; if they did they would be Levitically unclean for seven days.

The Jewish leaders were very careful and very ceremonial in not defiling their tradition with participating in the Passover. In order to take part in the Passover one would have to eat the Passover. According to the Johannine timeline the trial was on the fourteenth of Nisan. The paschal lamb was eaten in the afternoon, and later that evening on the same day.³¹

In verse 29 it is implied that Pilate knows that the Jews will not go into the palace, so Pilate comes out. This scene is awarded to the narrator, as he opens up the dialogue. It begins between Pilate, Jesus, and the Jews. But the action must play out and not end too hastily. This dialogue between the participants will increase the pressure, and the pressure will unfold the plot or the passion story for the audience to grasp the tragedy that was about to happen, since the tragedy was caused by the Jews.

In verse 31, since no evidence has supported the charges that have been brought against Jesus to Pilate, he sees no reason for sentencing Jesus. His advice to the Jews is

³⁰ Ernst Haenchen trans., *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; John 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ed. Frank Moore Cross et al (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1984), 178.

³¹ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 178-179.

for them to judge him themselves. The Jews retaliate by explaining that they have no real power according to their law.

But they had some power to make judgment. At this point no one wanted to deal with who is in control. Pilate did not want to exert his power, nor did the Jews. There Jesus stood in the middle of both groups not wanting to carry out the death sentence. Pilate did not want to because he didn't feel good about the entire ordeal, and the Jews did not want to because they hid behind their so-called traditional laws by claiming that they did not have power.

In his well-known book on the Jews in the Roman Empire, J. Juster has contested the view of John, and in his commentary Barret has followed Juster. J. Jeremias, comes to Juster's aid and critically demolishes the parade of witnesses to the contrary: (1) it was a special right of Jews to kill pagans who enter the inner court of the temple; (2) the burning of a priest's daughter who was taken in adultery took place under Agrippa I, when Jews had an unlimited power of judgment; (3) the high priest Ananus the younger disposed because he had James, the brother of Jesus, stoned, along with some other Christians, during the absence of the governor.³²

The incident with Stephen being stoned did not give the Jews a special privilege to kill Stephen, but it was just a group of Jews ready to punish Stephen. They took the law into their own hands. Nevertheless, historically, the Jews had one thought in this text, and that thought was to put Jesus to death, and they will eventually do that through Pilate. The word "fulfilled" (John 18:32) was referring to John 12:32. But in John 18:31 Pilate was determined to let the Jews kill Jesus, but the Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

³² Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 178-179.

This is why the “lifting up” phrase (John 12:32) pointed to the crucifixion, and not the stoning process. Jesus would be lifted up for all to be drawn to him, and the cross would provide that type of death. The custom that ancient Israel used was either death by stoning, or death by slow crucifixion. The Roman authorities would leave crucified bodies by the roadside for travelers to see what would happen if you broke the law.

According to Bultmann, verse 32 is a redactional addition. It is a play on 3:14, where Jesus spoke of his “lifting up.” But what does this verse mean? Does it mean that the Jews can’t kill anyone, with the result that Jesus’ word is fulfilled? Or does it mean that the demand of the Jews was successful, so that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled? Presumably it means the latter. In the context, it has the effect of a tactical agreement that reminds the reader that everything occurs in accordance with what Jesus had foretold.³³

From Mark’s gospel to John’s gospel, the passion story shows the phrase “King of the Jews.” There is a strong possibility that the use of these words derived from an earlier tradition. In this exegetical work, scholars of the *Hermeneia* commentary and the scholars of the *New Interpreter’s Commentary* as well as scholars such as Matthew Henry’s, *The New Bible Commentary* all stand in agreement with the passion narrative as the story of Jesus’ moves to (John 19:1-11).³⁴

After Pilate tried all of his tricks, schemes, and back peddling on Jesus’ trial (John 19:1-11), he now tries to break Jesus down through humiliation. Pilate couldn’t get Jesus to break during the private questioning, so now he makes Jesus a public spectacle by dressing him in a purple robe and putting a woven crown of thorns on his head, while mocking him by saying “Hail, to the king of Jews!” (John 19:3).

³³ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 179.

³⁴ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 179.

The Jews insisted on giving them Barabbas. In John 19:3 it seems that Pilate didn't succeed in releasing Jesus, or proving Jesus' innocence, but the Romans reverted back to a tradition by dressing Jesus up, robing, crowning, mocking, and showcasing him. This was a way of demoralizing the person to the lowest term. This was a tradition that they would use before they would execute the condemned. This was a tradition practiced by the Romans.³⁵ In Mark 15:16-20 and Matt. 27:27-31, John has created a way to insert this material into the passion story before Jesus goes to the cross. So it was easy for the Roman governor to do this, to allow this kind of treatment to take place; the humiliation and the mocking was a traditional, fixed punishment carried out by the soldiers.

Pilate publicly announced that he didn't find a sufficient charge that would hold up against Jesus. Therefore, the lobbying began for who has the power, or who will exert their power to do away with Jesus. Even though Jesus was found not guilty, somehow Pilate must find a way to still satisfy the Jews.

It is important that Pilate show some form of power so he will not lose respect or position within the Roman military organization, or lose his seat as the procurator in handling the administrative power and affairs of the Roman Empire.

This attempt has been made to find a historical kernel in this scene. Vincent Taylor recalls the mocking of the Jewish king, Agrippa I, in Alexandria. H Reich had sought to follow a similar line prior to Taylor. Cumont and P. Wendell are reminded of the Saturnalia or of the Persian festival of the Sacaea. Plutarch's story of the mocking of a Roman citizen by a group of pirates provides even fewer parallels. In Isaiah (50:6) has provided a model for persecution of the pious who suffer, which is hardly without influence on this story. The synoptic parallel to this story, according to which Jesus is mocked in the Sanhedrin following his

³⁵ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 181.

condemnation, is found in Mark 14:65, Matthew 26:67f., Luke 22:63ff. There the influence of Isaiah (50:6) is much clearer in evidence.³⁶

Scholars did not know if the fourth evangelist knew his OT traditions or not, but John could not use this information because he was not familiar with Jewish laws. If this part of the text is to be understood as a historical criticism, then questions will come up such as, where did the robe come from that the soldiers gave Jesus to put on? Mark has another idea about the robe; to him it is a robe of the lictor. For Mark, this robe showed significant power of those who wore it.³⁷

Based on Luke 23:11, Jesus left Herod and went back to Pilate wearing a wonderful robe, after the soldiers and Herod ridiculed him, but this may have stemmed up from a secondary version. This part of the text could be viewed as a redactional criticism since John stakes no claim to this being primary, but it could be a secondary source to the text.

The fourth major section of the gospel of John is the Passion narrative. In general, John covers the same ground as the synoptic gospels. Parallels between John and Mark, and a few between John and Luke have already been noted. Theories of sources and gospel interrelationships abound. Yet, no one doubts that the narrative in John has its own particular emphases.³⁸

Duling asserts that John's gospel portrays Pilate, a Gentile, as sympathizing with Jesus, while the Jews are the villains. Also, John's passion narrative portrays Jesus as sovereign, with the ability to stop everything if he desired, and not merely as a victim.

³⁶ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 180-181.

³⁷ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 181.

³⁸ Dennis C. Duling, *The New Testament: History, Literature, and Social Context*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2003), 436-437.

In verse 6 Pilate does everything possible to not condemn Jesus. He shows them Jesus, the man, as if he was saying, “See, look what stands before you; a helpless, beaten up, harmless man. Why do you want me to kill him? He has lost the battle, he is powerless.”

But this demonstration agitates the Jews even more than ever and they wanted blood, they want death, and so they shouted for Pilate to crucify him. Pilate tries one more time by repeating what he said in verse in 18:38 and 19:4: “I find no case against him.” In 19: 6 Pilate says: “You take him, I find no case against him.” At this point Pilate has lost his zeal to follow their demands. Was it because he heard the Jews say that he claimed to be the Son of God? The Jews answered Pilate “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God” (John 19:7).

Pilate stepped into his palace one more time and questioned Jesus, asking him where he was from. This entire trial brings an uneasiness to Pilate. The notion that if Jesus is politically innocent, and could be the Son of God sent from God, may have prompted Pilate to ask the question “where are you from” behind closed doors.

But Jesus does not answer. His silence confuses Pilate to the point that Pilate jumps into a rage and invokes his power on Jesus. “Bultmann understands the word “power” as legitimated power, authority, and right.”³⁹ This understanding lines up with Bultmann’s interpretation of verse 11:

Jesus’ response dumbfounds Pilate: “You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin. Bultmann interprets this verse as follows: the authority of the state is

³⁹ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 182.

not derived from the world, but has its basis in God. The “power, authority” of Pilate’s comes from God, however he may wield it.⁴⁰

After a close analysis and study of Gen. 11:1-9 and John 18:1; 19:1-11, both texts will support my DMin project. These texts will be foundational passages to help expose the unhealthy power and control in my context. As Christians, we are required by God to build up the body of Christ according to Eph. 4:11-13.

The Genesis text will demonstrate how some of the 21st century churches are not following God’s plan, but are following their own plan. Like Israel, my context has been building up their own dynasty with groups, cliques, and committees. This problem has been greatly ignored, not only in my context, but in many churches today. We also find unhealthy power and control in our homes, workplaces, and in schools. In my context, some of those with power abuse their power by lording it over new members, and driving first time guests (would-be members) away.

My project will attempt to expose leaders, ministers, and pastors who misuse their power for personal gain, and show how that destroys God’s plan to build up the Kingdom of God. Using John 18: 1; 19:1-11 texts, my project will point out ways to use “the power to love,” rather than “the love of power.” It is still God’s mandate that churches continue to build out, and through the scriptures God is pointing the church in the direction in which the church should go.

My context is an inwardly focused church, much like the people at Babel. As a result of that position, the church has become a social gathering of sorts. They have not reached out into the community; instead they hold events and invite their own family and

⁴⁰ Haenchen, *Hermeneia*, 182.

friends, thus keeping things under their control. Satan is still challenging God's authority by tempting God's people to use power in an unhealthy way.

Over the years the misuse of power and control has caused division within the church that I serve. Some members have chosen to leave the church, and others do not want to attend on a regular basis. Members will support their family member's event, but not support all events. People pick and choose where their support is placed by virtue of their relationship with the leader of the event. The mission of the church has been blurred and has become individualistic rather than communal. There seems to be no sense of a shared vision, but each one is doing what seems best to them, or what their ancestors did.

The misuse of power and control has been around for a long time in my context. No one has challenged or questioned it. From the pews to the pulpit, unhealthy power and control has been the leading cause for the church not growing. Some of those with power, misuse their power, not realizing that all power comes from God. My context has become like the Dead Sea. If anything comes in and sits too long without healthy guidance, it won't come out healthy. We will look at things that cause unhealthy power and control, such as low self-esteem and bullies in the church.

Just like Pilate was in and out of his palace questioning Jesus, behind closed doors, my context wields its power behind the closed doors of family dynamics. In other words, at one time, the largest family had the most power and say so in the church. A new member, if they got that far, couldn't express suggestions of any kind, simply because they didn't come from that family. This is unhealthy power and unhealthy control.

It is very evident that both of these scriptures are relevant to my context. The leaders in my context operate the same way that Israel did in the tower story. They build up instead of going out. They build themselves up on the backs of the meek, the mild, and the laid back quiet person.

Unhealthy power and control didn't just start in the Babel story. It started in the heavens with Satan challenging God (Isa. 14: 12). Satan's desire was to rule over God; he wanted ultimate control, so he challenged God's rule. And because he challenged God, he fell from grace. But unhealthy power and control did not stop there.

Adam and Eve failed to follow God's plan. The serpent flirted with Eve, tempting her to eat from the forbidden tree, and Satan said "you will be like God" (Gen. 3:4). Unhealthy power and control, the human desire to control and to have power, began to fill the creation in the Garden of Eden. Instantly Adam and Eve developed a desire to be like God. The text clearly shows humanity's desire to want more power than what God had already given. Unhealthy power and control did not stop there. It is seen in the Cain and Abel narrative, when Cain's offering did not please God. Cain demonstrates unhealthy power over his brother Abel by way of committing the first act of murder (Gen. 4:1-10).

This mysterious desire to please God baffles scholars to no end, scholars do not know exactly Cain's reasons, but we can only surmise that Cain was driven by pure jealousy for power, and he fell from God's grace. The unhealthy power and control issues continue throughout the Bible with Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:22), and the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Israel was constantly failing to submit to God's plan and to his authority.

From generation to generation, humanity has struggled with power and control.

Therefore, Israel's story becomes our story.

In my context, the church has failed to follow God's plan as well. The leaders seek prestige in the ministries in which they serve. They serve themselves by supporting their own events. If you are not part of their groups, then you do not fit in; you are considered an outsider. The words that they use to describe that "this is the way that we have been doing stuff around here," are cutting, demoralizing, and unhealthy. Power and control is not bad when used in appropriate ways, but when it hurts and excludes others it becomes unhealthy.

The laity leaders build cliques in the church in order to control the direction of the church. They are known as "gatekeepers." They build groups in the church using ministries to gain prestige, popularity, and applause. Like Israel, they build up instead of reaching out into the community.

Building out means touching the next person that we do not know. The church has operated in the same way as Babel, by not reaching out to the persons next door. The kingdom of God is a shared ministry, it is a shared vision and mission that comes from God, for all of God's people. In my context, unhealthy power and control has caused division in the church and has hindered church growth.

Laity and clergy also fall from God's plan, because they seek control and power, and begin serving pride and position rather than God's purpose for his people. Therefore, it is incumbent that the church, the leaders, and clergy understand the effects of unhealthy power and control, and the sin that it promotes. Sins such as greed, jealousy, pride, and self-centeredness accompany the misuse of power.

Congregations are to build God's kingdom for the oppressed, the marginalized, the least, the last, and the down trodden. We are not supposed to build towers for ourselves. This research will guide the church to identify and to overcome the need for practicing unhealthy power and control.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Throughout history power and control has been around since the beginning of time. Therefore, it is woven into the fabric and in every aspect of our society. Every person will come into contact with it and will experience the results of it. The use of power and control is integrated into the social and cultural life of society, and for some, it is an identity. This is a reflection of a deeper need that seeks for a certain kind of attention.

The issue of power and control has become evident in many arenas, such as in the home. Children growing up together is one way in which one can see the struggle of power and control at work. The older child takes the lead role in that relationship when it comes to who is in charge, and who makes the decisions while the parents are away.

The questions that power and control raise are: who is right, who is wrong, and who is in control? Even if their ages may not show a big difference between the children, somebody is left in charge. Power and control is taught at a very early age. We are taught to compete for power and control in sports. The one who shows that they are in control, and does not show weakness, is the one that has the presumed power. If power and control are not balanced correctly, then power brings prestige, and prestige brings pride. And pride ends up with unhealthy power and control anywhere and everywhere it goes.

Power and control is found almost everywhere - in schools, in homes, on jobs, in social life, media, sports, and in the church. When it is not used correctly it can be destructive. The misuse of power and control can and will damage relationships, cause divorces, split churches, and drive people away from their faith.

Therefore, this paper will provide a historical overview of recorded historical events and activities that became a driving force to promote unhealthy power and control in the early church. The writer will expose issues that arose in the early church, and give a brief sketch of the problems that the church fathers faced dealing with the issues of unhealthy power and control in the church. The writer will begin in the early eighteenth century, tracing how the early church fathers handled conflicting issues, and how decisions were made to address the problems in the early church.

The paper will also demonstrate how power and control shaped the thinkers who eventually went on to shape religion and Christianity as we know it today. The writer will also expose the church father's reasoning for their use of power and control in the church, and then reveal who had the power to control. The paper will then move into the nineteenth to the early twentieth century exposing the issues pertaining to unhealthy power and control in the modern day church.

The church has been largely responsible for developing the world in which we live. The church is known for implementing needed institutions such as schools, mental institutions, and jails. The early Church was also instrumental with ending the war, ushering in agape love, and abolishing slavery. This was the church's mission.

The early church resembles a tree, whose branches extend out in different sizes and in different directions. Nonetheless, the early church has several leaves and those

leaves go into different directions with different views on service, doctrine, theology and beliefs. Some had different views on how clergy should dress, with robes or without robes, and some of her leaves had differences in terms of the church building itself. Some churches place the altars as the focal point, and others lift up the pulpit, while others believe that the different colors hold precedent and are very important to the church. The church's furnishings were viewed as a high order of praise to God.¹

As the church began to take shape, the church began to take on many challenges that tried to hinder the birth of the gospel. The church underwent many critical trials and test, but the critical examination did not stop the mission of the church. Every church did not experience the sting of persecution. Persecution in one area, such as France, did not mean that the church in Africa or Greece was experiencing persecution also. But the church had her fair share of growth and struggle.

During the second century, that is, from 100 to 200 after Christ, the blows fell now here, now there, quite frequently, but not everywhere at once. During the third century, from 200 to 300, there were two periods of about fifty years each when the Church enjoyed almost complete peace throughout the entire Empire. But at the beginning of the century in 202, and in the middle in 250, and just after the close of the century in 303-304, the emperors tried to crush Christianity throughout the entire Roman world.²

In the quiet times, when things were at rest, Christians were more precise when it came to developing their visions about Christianity. Gnostics raised questions about who was right, and from there disagreements arose. The Gnostics felt that they were right because they had in their possession the teachings of Jesus, Peter, and Paul.

¹ Roland H. Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), 11.

² Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 28.

The Catholic Christians (the word “catholic” means “universal”) replied by asking to whom Jesus, Peter, and Paul would have been most likely to entrust any secret teachings. Would they not have confided such treasures to the bishops whom they selected to take charge of the churches? The word “bishop” in the New Testament meant an overseer, one who looked after a church, a pastor. And among these bishops, said the churchmen to the Gnostics, none was so well able to tell the mind of the apostles as the bishops of Rome, whose church was founded by two apostles, Peter and Paul.³

The Gnostics claimed to have in their possession the written books that were the secret teachings of Jesus and the apostles. Therefore, the Catholic Church was forced to say what books were going into the canon and what books were not. As time went by the church took a stand on what books were accepted. That did not stop the argument between the church and the Gnostics. The church named the bishops as their source of truth and later the truth was seen through the creed. The word *creed* derived from the Latin word *credo* meaning “I believe,” so then the truth was made into a creed, and the creed was put into motion.

Even though the creed was not written by the apostles, it adopted the name of the Apostles Creed.⁴ Between the two groups, the Catholic Church and the Gnostics, tension arose over the issues of who had the real teachings of Jesus Christ, and who had the authority and power to control what books should be allowed into the canon and what books were not. A clear dispute over power and control.

The church was at peace for a while. In the second century the church had developed a number of rules within the church, such as do not stuff food into your mouth, do not talk while you are eating, and do not drink and eat at the same time. These and

³ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 29.

⁴ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 30-31.

many more common guidelines were set in place, and the church was responsible for making sure that the people followed them. This was probably at a time when the church was at peace. But this peaceful time would soon come to an end.

During the third century, about every fifty years peace was broken. As the Christian church pursued her rightful place in the world, another period in the birth of Christianity arose when monks were called to serve the church. One great monk, Chrysostom was a priest at Antioch in Syria. He developed a name for himself as a great preacher throughout his time. He was chosen by the emperor's prime minister to serve at Constantinople, but did not want to go because he had made a name for himself at Antioch. Antioch enjoyed him and he adored Antioch. Chrysostom was later carried off and made to serve as a patriarch at Constantinople.

Constantinople did not receive Chrysostom. The congregation did not appreciate his preaching, because he preached against the wealthy. They had a problem with him and tensions flared as they grew angry. Chrysostom challenged the way that women dressed when attending church. The women dressed very stylishly when going to church, and they were not shy about telling Chrysostom to back off, so they lashed out in retaliation and disagreed with Chrysostom.

Chrysostom thought that the ministers should have been as stern as he was on the church. Alexandria, the patriarch in Egypt, was disappointed because he felt that he was the best person for Constantinople's charge. Alexandria always wanted to serve at Constantinople, so the people got together and kicked Chrysostom out of the church. He

was excommunicated from the church and went into exile and later died. From that time on the church at Constantinople suffered and had difficult times.⁵

As the church moved into the next challenge, another leader was selected to guide the church; his name was Ambrose. As Rome began to fall from her superiority in the church, Ambrose was nominated by the church to serve as their bishop. Ambrose was actually trying to duck an angry mob that wanted to put their nominee into office as bishop. The Arians and the Nicenes wanted their man in that seat. Ambrose decided to step inside of the church to avoid the conflict. When he entered the church the congregation yelled and pointed out his name to be the next bishop.

Ambrose accepted the position, and was made bishop without even being baptized. This was only the beginning of Ambrose's problems in the church.

His first great quarrel was with the empress Justina, who supported the Arians and demanded for the one basilica in the city of Milan. Ambrose, who stood for the Nicene faith, refused to give them any at all. His reason was simply that he considered the Arian belief wrong, but that Arianism had come to be the religion of the Goths, who had been converted by the missionaries from the Roman Empire at the time when the Arians were on the top. In the years following, most of the Empire accepted the Nicene faith while the Arian view spread among the barbarians, with the results that Arian has come to mean barbarian and the Nicene, Roman. The empress was hiring barbarian soldiers to defend the Empire against the barbarians.⁶

Ambrose challenged the empress by saying no and getting his worshippers to quickly fill the church up, which the empress wanted so desperately. She then sent in her troops to surround the church, while inside the church Ambrose and the congregation

⁵ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 50-53.

⁶ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 54.

started singing hymns. The empress' conscience would not let her army of barbarians attack the choir while they were singing. Bishop Ambrose was the victor.⁷

But Ambrose faced more trouble in the church. Another emperor, Theodosius, gave the order to kill seven thousand people, then later paid a visit to Milan, to the church of Saint Ambrose, for communion. But he was not welcomed because he had bloody hands. The Bishop met him at the entrance of the church and refused to serve him.

Chrysostom had not been successful in the East. He was not able to defeat the empress, but Ambrose was the victor in the West with both emperor and empress. This was the beginning of a new vision of how the churches in the West and the East would perform and operate.

With the emperor ruling the church in the East, the popes gave the orders to the church in the West. But first they had to do away with the Roman Empire completely before the new structure could happen.⁸ As time passed, the old ways in the church were slowly disappearing and the new ways were pushing into the new world of Christianity. But a man named Saint Augustine of Hippo would be responsible for the new order of Christianity entering into the church. However, Saint Augustine would not live to see his dream come true.⁹

Augustine never meant for the Roman Empire to fizzle away, and for the church to replace her. Instead, he wanted both the Roman Empire and the church to work

⁷ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 55.

⁸ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 56.

⁹ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 56.

together. He wanted the Empire to follow the church, and not the church follow the Roman Empire. But Augustine knew that the Roman Empire would not outlast the church. Popes tried to make that dream come true. Time would play a major factor now.¹⁰

As time went by there was another Augustine, but he was known as Augustine of Canterbury. England was introduced to Christianity in the sixth century by Augustine of Canterbury, whose strategy was to convert the Saxon king Ethelbert, whose queen, Bertha, was a Christian. The English monarchs have since then played an important role in the religious affairs of the British Isles. The interface between religion and politics was certainly not without friction.¹¹

As time went on, language was a major concern in the churches. The Latin churches had their idea of what was considered correct teachings and the Greek had their understanding as well. More arguing, power and control between the two created a reason to form separate churches. But all was not lost because with these two major denominations splitting, it caused Christianity to spread to Persia.

The Church faced more challenges, such as the clergy that served in the west were clean shaven, but those in the east wore beards. The western churches were entertaining the idea of allowing their clergy to marry. The churches in the east allowed the clergy to marry, up to the position of a bishop. But the two sides still had different views on their religious thoughts. Both churches felt that the Holy Spirit comes from God, but the west believed that the Holy Spirit came only to those who were in Christ.¹² The early church fathers grappled with haircuts, dress, the right teachings, land, and the calendar. All of them wanted to be in control.

¹⁰ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 56.

¹¹ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 2.

¹² Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 67.

Shaping the new world brought on more and more conflicts. Quarrels arose between the church and the state, because that the church owned a tremendous amount of land, and how the church could use that land. Another concern between the two was about things for which the state would be responsible and things for which the church would be responsible. Things for such as who should handle what situation, and who should make the decisions about the day to day affairs were issues of debate. Both wanted to have total control; sharing was out of the question.

The church did not want the state making decisions about marriages. Kings would match up with other neighboring states and decide who should get married to whom. The Catholic Church would not grant permission for anyone to get a divorce. When people got married the marriage was for a lifetime. If conflict arose between a king and his wife, a monk would try to settle it. If the king refused to stay with his wife, the church had two ways of solving the problem. First the king would be told to leave the church, which meant that the king would not receive communion. If that did not work the king would forfeit his land. But more disagreements came about.

The quarreling applied also to the choice of the pope, because the king or emperor, to make sure that the pope would not interfere with the choice of bishops, insisted on choosing the pope himself. To prevent this, the popes made the rule that the pope should be chosen by the cardinals. They are churchmen, most of whom live in Rome, and help the pope.¹³

As the early church fathers continued to shape the new world, they continued to recognize unhealthy power and control in the church, from the council of Nicene to the council of Trent, as well as the council of Chalcedon that had addressed the Trinity and

¹³ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 88.

the dual nature of Christ. The Trinitarian controversy arose because Christians were trying to determine the relationship between God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Did this mean that there were actually three gods? The central belief of Christian theology is that the one God exists in three persons and one substance; the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Athanasius, a young deacon who later became a bishop, explained that Christ and the Holy Spirit share in the being of God, but that God is one.¹⁴

More conflicts in the church led to the dispute over the trinity and resulted in riots. This shocked Constantine, so he called a council at Nicaea in an effort to settle the disputes. This was called the Nicene Council. Bishops from all over the world came. The council decided the day on which Easter would fall, and they held to the views of Athanasius regarding the relationship of Christ and God.

The Nicene Creed was written years later, but it displays the ideas of the Nicene Council. At the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople the doctrine of the trinity was defined in its simplest form, affirming the distinction of the divine persons, their equality, and eternal existence.¹⁵ The Council at Nicaea did not solve all of the controversy. There was still discussion about the relationship of Christ to the Father for many years afterward. When Constantine died he was followed by three sons. In their fight over the throne, the beliefs of the Arian and Nicene groups became entangled in their disputes. The Nicene party eventually won out and they decreed that anyone who denied the

¹⁴ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 42.

¹⁵ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 43.

Trinity should be put to death. This law was also used against the Unitarians.¹⁶ It changed from their own power to under that papal structure. They became members of the councils.

The influence of the Church of Rome, Augustine's legacy to medieval England, faced many tests in the lands north of the Channel. In the feudal period, the monarchy challenged the pope's prerogative to invest English bishops (who were in fact the monarch's vassals); in the early days of parliament, protectionist (if not xenophobic) tendencies resulted in several acts restraining the powers of, or appeals to, foreign powers such as the pope; a rising national self-consciousness, congenitally anti-French, led John Wycliffe to claim the Bible as an alternate authority to the pope.¹⁷

Wycliffe also accused the church of putting themselves above the scriptures because the leaders of the church were corrupt. Others, like the Humanists, accused the church of not serving the people. John Hus, a reformer who was accused of heresy, refused to apologize and ended up being burned at the stake by the church.¹⁸ Luther accused the church of denying the grace of God by selling indulgences, and had given up from following the ways of the bible.¹⁹ All of them had issues with the way the church was operating and its leadership.

Henry VIII came into power and he had challenges too. Henry VIII separated the Church in England from the Church in Rome, probably because the pope would not grant him a divorce from his wife. Henry wanted to divorce Catherine because they had not had

¹⁶ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 45-46.

¹⁷ Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 3.

¹⁸ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 123.

¹⁹ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 143.

a son. He was fearful that war would break out if he did not have a son to be king after he died.

The pope might have dissolved the marriage based on a flaw in the marriage, but emperor Charles V, who was Catherine's nephew, stopped Henry and the pope from proceeding. So Henry decided to separate the church. As king, he made himself the head of the English Church. The Church became divided, and Henry VIII used this as an opportunity to take money away from the Church. He shut down all monasteries since they were not as useful as they once were when they served as spiritual retreats and places of learning. The Black Death of 1348 took the lives of many in England, to the point that there were not enough qualified people to be monks. The Catholic Church was also closing some of the monasteries. Henry closed them all, saying that he has caught the monks in wicked living.²⁰

Henry chose Thomas Cranmer as archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer believed some of Luther's ideas, and he was glad that Henry had separated the Church from the pope. Cranmer believed that the king had the right to be the head of the Church. Knowing that the majority of English people still loved the Catholic Church, including its sacraments and services, Henry and Cranmer were slow to make changes in the Church.

One significant change was that the Bible was in English, not Latin, and was put in all churches. William Tyndale had translated it from Greek Testament printed by Erasmus. Tyndale could not print his book in England, so as not to upset the pope, so it was printed in Germany and smuggled into England.

²⁰ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 158.

Most people in England went along with Henry's actions. Some monks, church members, and state officials felt that since he was king he had no right to be head of the Church, nor did Parliament have the right to make laws for the Church. But if anyone did not submit to Henry's authority he had them put to death.²¹

The Roman Catholics found themselves revising and correcting many mistakes that the Protestant Reformation had created. Therefore, the Catholics were enforcing a new order, and those who enforced it were known as soldiers of the Pope: the Capuchin, the Jesuit, and the Daughters of Charity. They served by giving up food, and when people got sick the Capuchin were the first to serve.²² Ignatius Loyola, a soldier, came along renouncing service to the queen of Spain, but ready to serve the Virgin Mary in heaven. That statement got him in trouble with the church leaders so they had him examined to make sure his teachings were not going against what the church practiced.²³

In the year 1870 Italy was made one nation and all power as a state was taken away from the church. The Popes disliked this very much because they said that the head of the church ought not to have to live in the country of any earthly ruler because the Church speaks for the Heavenly Ruler of all men.²⁴

While the Catholics and the Protestants became more distant between each other, the Puritans tried to get the Parliament to change the structure of the England Church. The Parliament ignored the request, the Puritans planted themselves within the Church, and continued to cause problems, while others moved on from the Church and started

²¹ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 159.

²² Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 164.

²³ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 165.

²⁴ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 170.

new ones of their own on the outside. They were viewed as Separatists, Nonconformists, Dissenters, and Independents. The most important groups were the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, and Unitarians.

Each of these groups would have a challenge with what they believed. Later the Puritans used their power to shut down the use of the Book of Prayer. Stained glass windows that showed saints representing the Roman Catholic Church were destroyed. All of this landed on the plate of Archbishop Laud. He was okay with everything as long as the people would dress and worship alike in the church. Because the church represented England, and was in England, He felt that everybody should dress, worship, and pray the same.²⁵

It was not until the 1550s, however, under Edward VI, that the English Church became Protestant in doctrine and ritual, and even then it remained traditional in organization. Under the Roman Catholic Mary I, a politico-religious reaction resulted in the burning at the stake of some prominent Protestants and exile of many others, which led in turn to a popular association of Catholicism with persecution and Spanish domination. When Elizabeth I succeeded to the throne in 1558, however, she restored a moderate Protestantism, codifying the Anglican faith in the Act of Uniformity, the Act of Supremacy, and the thirty Nine Articles.²⁶

As the new world moved from the last half of the eighteenth into the first half of the nineteenth century, the rich did not care for the churches. The care of the church was left up to the poor to cater to the church's needs. Church leaders had only one thing in mind, and that was to keep living in their comfort at the church and at poor people's

²⁵ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 174-175.

²⁶ David Cody, "The Church of England (the Anglican Church)" The Victorian Web, last modified November 24, 2014, accessed October 22, 2015.
<http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/denom1.html>.

expense. At this point in history the care and the life of the church was put on the backs of poor people. That meant the upkeep and the financial responsibility was solely the responsibility of the marginalized, while the wealthy enjoyed their past time playing their games, taking strolls, and tending to their profits.

If the churches were neglected and little was done for those who came to them, nothing whatever was done for those who stayed away from church. The masses of the English poor were too dirty and drunken to be welcomed by the English clean nice folk who drove in their carriages to church. Few thought of bringing religion to the poor of England, or cared whether the common people were interested in religion.²⁷

Another movement was birthed out of the eighteen century. It was called the Methodist movement, and the founder was John Wesley. Wesley had strong followers, such as his brother Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield, and more were to come.

Both John Wesley and George Whitefield wanted the people to experience what they were feeling, the move of the Spirit, in a different way, but the church had grown so sterile and distanced to their messages about new possibilities in the church, that the pulpits became off limits to Methodists. The Church of England closed their doors to these two preachers. But that did not stop them. Since the inside of the church was off limits, they began preaching outside of the church. The ordinary people accepted them, but others in the church did not.

But like the rest, John Wesley had his troubles and conflicts, too. The members of the Church of England did not want to hear what John Wesley had to say about the new idea of God and what Methodism had to offer. So they tried in every way to hinder them from preaching. They tried distracting them by hiring mobs to blow horns when

²⁷ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 190.

they began to speak. They hired mobs to start arguments right before them while they were preaching the gospel. The members of the Church of England did not succeed.

Wesley created his own pulpits outside of the church. He went to the coal miners, prisons, and into the poorest parts of England; to all who had ears to hear about the new birth. As time passed, Wesley's approach towards this new idea of Christianity grew, and the people began to accept his preaching. The cities and Mayors and those angry mobs began to settle down and those tough cities that Wesley had problems reaching became easy cities to preach in.

This movement all started because the Church of England refused to allow him to speak in the church, and because the Church of England refused to let him in to preach the idea of new birth, Wesley sought out for other possible means of preaching inside instead of outside.

For instance an old abandoned building that was used for a cannon factory was available. Wesley converted it into a place of worship and teaching, with a few repairs minor and major repairs, Wesley was in business. But still more problems were in the midst. The movement attracted lay people to serve as lay ministers. More lay preachers came that needed to be ordained, but the Church of England refused to ordain them. John Wesley moved quickly to solve that problem, he had one consecrated who could do the laying of hands on the ministers. Behind the notion of developing class leaders, renovating old factories, and having his own bishops, the movement was now officially separated from the Church of England.

This was not John Wesley's intent from the beginning, to divide the Church of England, but the Church of England gave him no choice. They did not want to recognize

the poor, the needy, the homeless or the marginalized. It was their church and outsiders were not permitted to come in to worship; this was disturbing to John Wesley. He wanted to save the Church of England from her own destruction. His vision was to be twice born again. John Wesley was successful, but did not live to see it come to pass. Students followed his vision about one hundred years later, attempting to see how they could infuse Wesley's vision for all of England's Churches.

These students followed the exact pattern that John Wesley and his team had followed, from meeting in Oxford University to using the same rooms. They felt that the Enlightenment had scaled back the importance of what faith meant and the reasoning behind Christianity. They felt that Puritanism had demolished the sacredness and the richness of the idea of God by eliminating what the Church of Rome had instituted in the church in the Middle Ages. These followers of Wesley were reminiscing on what that might look like in the Church of England.²⁸

As the England Church had been in need for a revival in Wesley's day, so a century later Methodism itself was in need of a revival. The great-grandchildren of the first poor Methodist had grown too prosperous to care greatly for the poor of their own day. Yet the Methodist Church still had enough spirit of Wesley to make more men who were like him.²⁹

A new world opened up and it was called America. Methodism found its place in it among the other denominations. As Methodism traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to introduce herself to the people awaiting her, not only would Methodism meet new people, but she would also encounter new problems and challenges in the new world.

²⁸ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 194.

²⁹ Baiton, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 196.

A whole new set of problems were awaiting Methodists in America as the birth of Methodism began. The transition from England to America had grown tense. Wesley was accused of struggling with his emotions and his emotions got the best of him.

Wesley was deeply in love with Sophy Hopkey and they were engaged to be wedded, but all of a sudden the marriage was called off. Wesley was devastated by Sophy calling the wedding off for no apparent reason and marrying someone else, which most scholars believe led Wesley to refuse to serve Sophy Hopkey communion, and the church ran him out of Georgia. The church leaders, like Asbury, Thomas Rankin and others wanted Wesley to come to America, but Wesley was reluctant to go. He did not make the trip, which made his leaders disappointed in him.

The next problem the church faced was that of laity. Laity challenged the structure of Methodism with their zeal to participate without being ordained. That kind of trouble was about laity's lack of respect with ordained clergy. They felt that they did not have to listen to any clergy, since clergy were not responsible for the move of Methodism in America. Then there was the ordeal with racism in the church with Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and a few others.

Europe was responsible for planting the seeds in many religious movements in America.

The American Religious situation: The actual beginning of Methodism in America, those with demonstrable historical consequences, date from the 1760s. At that time Protestant Christianity had been growing in the English colonies for nearly one hundred and fifty years. Methodist were preceded by Congregationalists, Anglicans, Baptist, Dutch, and German Reformed, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Quakers, and numerous other small groups. They had been on the scene for a long time already, and in some colonies had preempted the ground as established churches, protected and fostered by the government through tax revenues and legal preference. Thus the Congregationalists were established in

New England (except for Rhode Island) and the Anglicans in Virginia and the Carolinas. Although the Roman Catholics had begun a unique experiment in Maryland, they had been displaced by the Anglicans.³⁰

The origin and birth of these religious beginnings developed out of Europe. At the same time other denominations, such as the Congregationalists and other churches felt the sting from laity wanting to take over and be in total control.

At this time in history the great Awakening ushered in a powerful movement, a new movement, giving life and spirit to the churches, but that's not all it brought in, it also brought in conflict, stress, and pressure which ended up with churches dividing. In this case, as the churches began to expand, conflict followed. The movement was already faced with little flames flickering throughout local churches, but now the Great Awakening brought forth a burst of energy to the religious world. Whitefield was instrumental for bringing this extraordinary outburst of excitement to the churches.

A strong movement such as The Great Awakening ushered in the spirit of enthusiasm, which no doubt challenged the Enlightenment. The sudden impulse of extemporaneous preaching would be the force that would usher in opposition to the more intellectual thinkers, or the more philosophical mindset of that day. Nonetheless, that caused a split from the old way to the new way.

Denominations such the Congregationalists, experienced a split and the Presbyterians as well, but only for a moment.

Finally, this pervasive religious influences had its political consequences in the closer association of the colonies as the powerful revival crossed boundaries and brought men of distant regions into contact with one another. The Great

³⁰ Fredrick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1974), 61-62.

Awakening may not have planted the seeds of the American Revolution, but it plowed the ground and fitted it for new things.³¹

The planting of Methodism continued. The planters did not get permission to start the Methodist movement in America from anyone, certainly not from the founder, John Wesley. Wesley had no idea that the movement had begun in America until a need for help reached him in England through a letter. They needed more leaders, not just leaders, but experience leaders. Laity was in total control with what little they knew about new church starts.

The central person responsible for this was a layman by the name of Robert Strawbridge. Strawbridge, along with other independent lay Methodists, refused to be guided by the rules of Methodism that were in place. But the lay people, without any authorization from the ordained ministers, were determined to continue to preach, teach, and lead the church without training or being ordained.

Strawbridge did not have patience for rules, regulations, or to even listen to what ordained ministers, such as Francis Asbury had to say. He was strong minded and felt that he did not have to ask anyone for permission to serve in ministry. He began preaching because he saw a need for it, and in the same need he served the sacraments, the Lord's Supper, and baptized those who wanted to be baptized, which almost caused a break in the Methodist movement.

He was most difficult to deal with, but he was not the only one leading and serving churches. There were others who felt the call to lead and serve and were not ordained. Lay people were the first to start the Methodist movement in America. They

³¹ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 64-65.

were not ordained, but very much untrained and not willing to comply with the process that John and his brother, along with Asbury, had set up.

As Methodism pushed its way through America, Black Methodists began to evolve in America. Negro Christianity spun off on a very high note. The Baptists and the Methodists were two large groups operating in America. Blacks flocked around these two denominations.

More black Christians have found a church home among the Baptists than in any other denomination. Before the end of the eighteenth century, Negroes were gathering on the Baptist model into local congregations, which allowed them to escape control and supervision by white institutions. This was easier to accomplish in the North than the South. The first decade of the nineteenth century saw the organization of African congregations in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. In the South the more common pattern was the inclusion of Blacks in the Baptist congregations with mixed membership. Occasionally, Blacks would out number Caucasians by a large percentage; but control always rested with the white leaders, even in those rare instances in which Blacks were separated in congregations of their own.³²

One of the most powerful persons in the plight of the Black church to rise into position was Richard Allen. It was in the year 1787, a very important year, because this was the year that Richard Allen stood up in the St. Georges Methodist Episcopal church and walked out. It was after a number of injustice acts, including segregation. In 1787 during worship two black worshippers decided to go and pray. Blacks were allowed to worship upstairs in the balcony, while the whites worshipped downstairs. Two African Americans decided that day to go downstairs to pray. Immediately they were pulled up from praying at the altar by two white trustees of the church, and Allen responded by getting up and led them out of the church, and other blacks followed.

³² Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 165.

Soon after Allen started the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. In 1794 they began to worship separately. But later, they would face the issues of power and control, in regards to the church property. Who was in control of church property was now the question. This issue of control brought questions to Wesley's "Model Deed." Wesley believed there was a good cause to have control in the larger church, but not so much in the local church. This had become law in the book of Discipline.

However, this became a question for those black members who now had the opportunity to worship by themselves. The question was still in front of them, "who is in control of the church?" For instance they were concerned with who will call the shots in the local church. All they wanted was a place to worship, ownership, and total control. This no doubt created a lot of tension and disagreements.³³ But even after the birth of the AME Church, trouble, power, and control would soon follow the rise of the Black Methodist Church.

Shortly after the structure of the AME Church, the AMEZ ran side by side of the AMEs, and a series of conflicts interfered within these two churches concerning their administration and leadership. Like always there was the issue with the black and white disagreements over control, but now there was conflict between the two black denominations.

The issue was that the Allenites and the Zionites could not agree on leadership. Who is in control in the church? Many more struggles behind the rise of the Black church would bring discussion to the table; conflicts such as the blacks wanted their own time to

³³ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 170.

meet. So schism after schism would appear. From the control of property, to ordination of Negro preachers, the early Black church has experienced unhealthy power and control.³⁴

Out of about 5,300,000 Americans over one million were black, about one-fifth of the population in 1800. Approximately one out of ten was free; the rest were slaves. Although the slave population more than doubled by 1830, the proportion of free Blacks increased slightly to about one in seven in the decades before the civil war.³⁵

Slavery was another issue that sprung up. Not only was the nation divided on the view of slavery, but churches were too. The only leader that was not totally against slavery was George Whitefield. Whatcoat did not like it, and Asbury stood against it.³⁶ The Cotton King brought an enormous amount of power and control within the Southern churches. Slavery was fueled by racism, and racism caused separation, with blacks leaving the Methodist Episcopal Church. Eventually, white control and power in the church caused the black church to separate from the white church. The churches not only became divided, but they became divided by their faith, families, and beliefs systems.

From the early eighteenth century to the twenty-first century, power and control is still alive in every home, school, organization, and church. In the twenty-first century the church is still faced with the same issues that the early church fathers faced.

Control can dominate, stifle creativity, and suffocate people and their ability to deal with conflict. Or control can bring order to chaos, security to craziness, and clarity to complexity.³⁷

³⁴ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 172-174.

³⁵ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 164.

³⁶ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 186.

³⁷ Norma Cook Everist, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 110.

To have the ability to control can be seductive. This power if used incorrectly and without balance can seduce one's faith. Community organizers, pastors, and laity who operate under the love of power to control can damage the relationship with people, so that over time people will not be able to make decisions for themselves.

Control can also cripple people from knowing their capabilities, their strengths, and their God given gifts. They will never ever discover their true self, how they think, or how to act on their own. Control can also shut people down and destroy hopes, dreams, and visions. Leaders in the church need to know when to back off when too much control is going on. Manipulation can come out of the need to be in control. The need to control a problem and to not expose the situation can be the evidence of a cover up. Simply not knowing can show a person's low self-esteem and reveal little confidence in him or herself.

Pastors need to learn how to let go when the assignment is up. When a pastor has been appointed to a church and has served the church, but now it is time to move on, some pastors find that task very difficult to do. They still have conversations with the existing members, they pastor the members, and members take their advice. Pastors with control issues even find it necessary to pay visits to members. In other words they need to be needed.³⁸

This historical study on power and control in the early church and the church in the twenty first century was essential for my Doctor of Ministry project. The historical research helped me to discover the roots of power and control. I was able to see set

³⁸ Everist, *Church Conflict*, 114-115.

patterns, characteristics, and how the early fathers made decisions to keep the control that produced the power in the church.

The historical study also gave me insight on how all of the leaders were willing to persecute, suffer, and even create rivalry for the purpose of staying in control. This background provided me with the answers to why most of the church leaders operate the way in which they do.

From the pulpit to the pew, in some form or fashion, power and control is visible today as it was in the early church. Through this historical work it is evident that church conflict is inevitable; conflict will happen. From sitting on someone's pew, to taking a position on the church board, who can serve and who cannot serve has always been an issue. This is because there is always somebody in the home, workplace, school, in some organization, or church who is looking to have power and control.

It was very interesting to see how the church fathers came to reason with their opponents over power and control, and to let them know without a doubt who was in control. But the Church then, the early church, in some ways was no different than church administration, leadership, and praise and worship today. There was no compromise, very little conversations, and no making room for all. It was either being controlled or taking control, with no middle ground.

The type of religion that was practiced then gave birth to religion in America now. But it was also interesting to discover from the seeds of our religion, why we do what we do, started in Europe. We still practice today in the twenty-first century, those same seeds of religion. We use the same rituals, those same blueprints to decide on our worship styles, our theology, doctrine, and polity in the church.

If a Baptist person joins the Methodist church, the Methodists do not make room for Baptist traditions. If a Pentecostal person joins the Methodist church, the Methodist church leaders say that you are too loud, sit down, we do not do that here. Some churches say that you cannot serve until you have joined the church. These and many more restrictions have stifled church growth due to a spirit of selfishness. The early church had different issues, but the main issues were that of power and control, and those control issues ended up in bloodshed or excommunicating someone from the church.

The church in the twenty-first century uses different methods to get their message across to the outsider as to who is in control in the church. We excommunicate by discouraging, alienating, or through family dynamics. Sometimes the largest family in the church gains control because of their size and influence, and what they say goes. After doing this historical research on who is in control, it has provided me with the genesis of the early church fathers' issues with control.

It has also motivated me to teach, preach, and provide workshops on the topic of unhealthy power and control beginning with the church fathers. I will teach how land or territory was an important factor in the church, and how church territory in today's church is still a matter of power and control. The difference is that today's church territory has more to do with turf wars and who controls the church. The workshop will provide information on how we inherited power and control from the workplace to the church, and how unhealthy power and control can destroy people, the church, and ultimately ourselves.

Unhealthy power and control has destroyed so many lives in the church. It has moved through the church like a hurricane, shutting down ministries, erasing missions,

and blocking people's ability to see authentic power and control. The pride and prestige that comes out of control have caused people to give up on each other, and overshadows the need to trust, love, help one another, and to build up the church instead of tearing each other apart.

This Doctor of Ministry project will provide life for the church, and ways to use power and control in healthy ways. Participants will learn to recognize and to operate in healthy power and control, thus leading to a healthier church environment. Jesus demonstrates God's command that it is the power to love, and not the love of power that churches should model.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The movement of this section will show how all human power and authority comes from God because God is sovereign, and how humans abuse the use of power. For the Corinthian church unity was absent and conflict was prevalent. Paul's theology for the Corinthian church was that he believed that the body of Christ was a metaphor for the church. The Corinthian church began to experience separation because of their different religiosities and their zeal to control.

In this chapter I will address the different opinions over power and control that eventually caused division within the body. Because of their diverse traditions, and different beliefs on religious practices, the Corinthian members fought over who should serve which developed a major chasm between the members.

The members were more concerned with positions in the church rather than keeping the unity for the church. Paul's theology of unity is expressed to the church that the church represents "The Body of Christ." This metaphor was to help the members to maintain unity, love, and fellowship among themselves through the expression of Jesus Christ as the body.

This theological understanding of "unity" in the body of Christ is significant for the 21st century church today. This paper will show how the church struggles to preserve

the unity because of the unhealthy desire for power and control. The practice of unhealthy power and control over who can serve, or who is eligible to serve has released a toxic spirit into the minds of the laity leaders and pastors to the point where division has forced the church into a decline.

The church is still dealing with pastors, ministry leaders, and other laity climbing over one another for position. This behavior creates conflict and division. While many pastors or ministry leaders turn their heads, or pretend not to hear the cries of the victims, those who want to serve but are not allowed, this behavior only escalates. Eventually conflict turns into abuse, then the entire church begins to spiral downward and experience a loss of membership.

The destruction behind unhealthy power and a need to control causes the church to fall into a spiritual dilemma, which makes this author ask the question of how the church can make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. If this type of practice of ministry is allowed to happen in the church, if pastors, ministry leaders and other laity are not challenged in a practical theological way, then the kingdom of God will not be a reality in the church for the new believer.

The church has a great need for humble servant leaders that do not mind decreasing so that Jesus Christ will increase. The body of Christ needs servant leaders with a servant heart, and ready to serve the people and not the position.

When the practice of sharing the power between pastors, ministry leaders, and other laity can be lived out in the church, then the spirit of inclusivity is born. When inclusiveness is practiced and embodied, then the kingdom of God becomes a reality and disciples of Christ are made through the sharing of God's mission and ministry.

Another theological theme that this paper will address is: God is the God of community. Some church leaders have pursued ministry positions, to the point that power has become the focus rather than reaching out and pursuing people and their needs. For some church leaders it is more important to serve in position than position themselves to serve.

This paper will be in dialogue with theologians that will show that God stands side by side with community and God is invitational, which means that God is always inviting humankind into kingdom building. God is always inviting humankind into a shared relationship. God will never omit a willing heart or turn away a member of the body of Christ.

In Gen. 11:1-9, in the tower of Babel account, God willed for the church to build out and not up. Power and prestige consumed the community. Like then, some of the churches in the 21st century build up instead of building out. Building up then becomes all about the position and not about God's plan to rescue the least, last, or the lost.

Building up church positions rather than reaching out to the broken person has become more popular in modern day churches. This unhealthy practice of power and control has caused the leaders to build up their own dynasty rather than inviting and sharing the ministry of all believers. In order for the new person who seeks to build a relationship with God, learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, and be a vital part of growing the kingdom of God, one must be allowed to participate. Churches must embody God's mission for the world.

Therefore, churches must identify with Jesus Christ and his mission. That is what Paul meant when he said that the church must resemble the body of Christ. The theological issues addressed here are: many churches are operating under unhealthy power and control, and unhealthy power and control has caused the church to lose their true identity and calling. The power of unity will crush the spirit that causes people to think that it is more important to serve in a position than position ourselves to serve.

James Cone in his book, *Speaking the Truth*, asks the question: what is the church? A question that needs an answer for the traditional and contemporary challenges that the church faces today. Cone points out that other great thinkers such as Ernst Troeltsch, H. Richard Niebuhr, Peter Paris, Carter G. Woodson, Karl Barth, and Jurgen Moltmann have developed their own special theological focus on the question, what is the church? All of these scholars wrote from their various viewpoints.

None of these foci should be isolated from the others, because each is important for the formulation of a meaningful, contemporary definition of the church. Every generation of Christians should ask: What is it that constitutes our identity and thus empowers us to live it out in the world? To answer this question, we must focus on the institutional and ethical activity that validates our ecclesiological confessions. If we separate the doctrine of the church from its historical embodiment in our congregational life, we will also ignore the social and political significance of our creedal formulations. Therefore, whatever else we may advance as our definition of the church, we should never separate the doctrine of the church from the specific local congregation.¹

Cone speaks of how the political church has separated herself from the community and that the community needs to survive. Cone also points out the importance of the church not turning away from her true theological identity and nature to carry out

¹ James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 111- 112.

God's call, which is to serve and not to be served. Many churches fight to serve and preserve the political theology in their context, and are blind to the need for serving the socio-economic challenges on their front porches and in their backyards.²

Jesus walked into a socio-economic culture filled with corrupt power and control; one that looked down on the poor. Cone mentions that churches are not focusing on their historical ecclesiological faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.³

By focusing their attention on a doctrinal understanding of the church that has little sociological relevance, theologians can ignore obvious historical contradictions and shortcomings of empirical churches. This abstract theological maneuver makes it possible for theologians to speak of the church as the "body of Christ" without saying a word about its relation to broken human bodies in society.⁴

Cone believes that the church has a social role as well as a political role, and that most church leaders overlook the social needs of God's people and flock to the political roles. Cone also points out that churches are caught up in the socio-economic political end only because they are recipients of the values that come from that status, such as political platforms, media, and the local paper.⁵

Therefore, churches find it challenging to really stand against the type of oppression that exists in the church. Churches have hidden behind their elitism using clever conversations and theological language, and at the same time, saying we care

² Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 112.

³ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 112.

⁴ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 112.

⁵ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 112.

about the least, but then do nothing about looking for ways to challenge the socio-economic pillars that are responsible for their poverty.⁶

While church leaders and pastors lobby in the interest to serve political positions in the church, the social needs that plague the congregation still haunt the people who are impoverished and imprisoned in an unjust social order. A poem was created to reflect the church that church people don't care for.

I was hungry and you formed a humanities club and you discussed my hunger. Thank you, I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel and cellar and prayed for my release. I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance. I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health. I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God. I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me, you seem so holy; so close to God. But I'm still very hungry and lonely and cold. So where have your prayers gone? What have they done? What does it profit a man to page through his book of prayers when the rest of the world is crying for his help?⁷

The zeal to control the socio-political system has crippled the church. It has influenced church leaders and pastors to put sociological concerns on a slow drip rather than bring resolution to the greater need. The churches fail to see the relationship between the sociology of the church and the theology of the church, and how they correlate together to bring a holistic and necessary unity to the Christian church, the church of Jesus Christ.

A friend, struggling with making a wise decision about a career move, told me recently, "The other day I prayed that I wish God had made me a robot so He could just tell me what to do and I could obey. Then I'd feel secure." This made me reflect on the issue of control, and God's dealings with it.

Historically, control in the sense my friend was talking about has not been a good thing. I'm not sure which came first, the chicken or the egg, but it seems that God did not make us to be controlled beings and therefore we don't flourish

⁶ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 112.

⁷ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 112-113.

under a controlling system. When governments have been controlling—systems like communism, the radical Popes, or the Caesars have been in place—man has been tyrannized. Communist Russia under Stalin is perhaps the most extreme example, where the goal really was a robotic-like and supreme control of man, and a death toll of 15 million was the result. For more on this psychology, read Orwell's *1984*.⁸

Control and government have always led to revolution. Such was the case with Luther's Reformation and the American Revolution.

While Catholicism historically preserved empires, Reformation Christianity fostered republicanism. And while philosophical conservatism preserves authority structures, liberalism has always aimed at them. So it is worth reflecting on the principles of freedom, control, and Christianity.

When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He gave them free will to obey or disobey. Calvinists and Armenians disagree over the issue of foreordination, but a plain reading of the Scriptures indicates that Adam and Eve did have liberty to decide to obey God or not: God did not create a controlling structure where Adam and Eve were commanded or manipulated to behave each moment; He simply laid out one restriction and let them go. God even walked with Adam in the cool of the day, and there is a general atmosphere of peace and freedom as we read the early accounts.

Then, after the fall, we see subsequent generations continuing to use their freedom for evil. Cain had the freedom to murder Abel, the men before Noah had the freedom to fill the earth with violence, Canaan had the freedom to lead a race astray, Nimrod had the freedom to build the tower of Babel, and on and on. Finally God stepped in the picture and “took control” starting with Abraham, where He called someone to Himself and began consecrating a whole race of people who would follow Him by law, circumstances, and whatever other external or governing means it took.⁹

While the Jews had the freedom to obey or disobey God, God instituted a “more controlling form of relationships” by allowing them to reap the consequences of disobedience, as did Adam and Eve.¹⁰ In the NT, Jesus further lessened the reigns of

⁸ Will Riddle, “Theology and Control,” accessed March 9, 2016, <http://kingdomchange.org/church-practice/theology-and-control/>.

⁹ Riddle, “Theology and Control.”

¹⁰ Riddle, “Theology and Control.”

control and allowed people to choose to serve him. Jesus “sends us the Holy Spirit to operate from within believers, and allows Paul to teach and administrate with a restored atmosphere of freedom because he knows the Holy Spirit is in him [Paul]. . . . God is a God of self-government.”¹¹

And so the danger of living in a system without control—whether on a personal level with our God or an institutional level with our government—is that we still choose whether to obey or disobey . . . and others do, too. This means that evil can happen. . . . Or peace and liberty can. The blessings of owning a business, having the freedom to shop, enjoying a picnic on the commons, choosing to pursue a degree (or not), and many other things are the product of a government which allows liberty. We must weigh these things carefully when we say we would rather have more control so we could feel more secure. . . .

But the principles of God’s nature and Word show us even more clearly that no system which robs man of his essential responsibility and accountability for his own life can be godly. Any system or philosophy which allows someone else to be responsible for our decision-making (even one that looks to God or worse, blames Him, for circumstances) is moving away from the direction God intends His children to have/enjoy.

Certainly having responsibility is more difficult, but in the end it only leads to more blessing. Let us keep the original vision of Adam and Eve, freely with their God in the Garden, as our model and not allow cheap substitutes which play on our fears or lusts to sneak a place in our hearts.¹²

When unhealthy power and control lives and breathes in the church, most often pastors, leaders, and other laity choose to look the other way. Therefore, the researcher will define the theological and sovereign use of power and control from God’s point of view. Theology is defined as the study of God. The Christian understanding of the practice of theology is to be understood that God is liberating and setting the captives free from oppression.

¹¹ Riddle, “Theology and Control.”

¹² Riddle, “Theology and Control.”

The social teachings of the black church begin with God as the one who has the ultimate power and control. God is understood as being omnipotent. Therefore, Cone points out that God is on the side of the oppressed, and that God through Jesus Christ offers liberation. Cone makes the argument that there is no freedom aside from Jesus Christ —past, present, and the eschatological coming. Jesus is the bedrock of our hope for those that struggle from oppression, and our future of freedom will be fully realized and free from oppression, because liberation is a promise from God.

Cone explains the meaning of human liberation. Liberation is God at work using salvation through Jesus Christ and cannot be divided from Christology's sources - Scripture, tradition, and social existence.¹³ Cone points out:

In this sense, liberation is not a human possession but a divine gift of freedom to those who struggle in faith against violence and oppression. Liberation is not an object, but the project of freedom wherein the oppressed realize that their fight for freedom is a divine right of creation.¹⁴

Cone further states that Ernst Kasemann believes that Jesus is freedom, and for Moltmann not only does the Christian faith stand for being free, but the Christian faith itself is freedom for all. Throughout history, God shows humanity's freedom through Godself and is seen as the God of hope, liberating the oppressed. And this freedom that God speaks of is for the entire universe, all life on earth.

“Christian theology,” writes Moltmann, “speaks of history eschatologically.” To speak of history eschatologically is to speak of the promise of God's Word of liberation, disclosed in God's future, breaking into our present, and overthrowing the powers of evil that hold people in captivity.¹⁵

¹³ James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 127.

¹⁴ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 127.

¹⁵ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 128.

This researcher agrees with Cone that the church has not lived out her true meaning of faith, and has turned her head away from the social needs, focusing more on the political doctrine of the church. The United Methodist service of Word and table agrees with Cone and explains what the church has failed to do through the confession and pardon.

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another. Merciful God we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.¹⁶

According to James Harris, “From slavery to the civil rights movement, the church has played an indecisive and somewhat passive role in changing the status quo.”¹⁷

In the black church, especially the United Methodist church, one of the pastor’s ecclesial duties in the church is to order the life of the church and not just the political but also the social order as well. Because of unhealthy power and the need to control, the call for preachers to serve in the black United Church has not been very uplifting. Monty Hale points out in *The Baptist Courier*:

A growing number of pastors are being forced to leave their churches over what the South Carolina Baptist Convention official calls “control issues.” The question of who is going to run the church has consistently ranked as the number

¹⁶*The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1999), 12.

¹⁷ James Harris, *Pastoral Theology: A Black Church Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1952), 2.

one reason cited for forced terminations of pastors of Baptist churches in South Carolina since 2005, according to surveys.¹⁸

In 2009 it was reported that fourteen pastors' employment ended over the issue of control. Other power plays that caused pastors to become unemployed were related to the style of leadership. The pastor's ways of leading were too strong or the leadership was not strong enough and the church did not want to change.

Monty Hale further points out that unhealthy power and control is on every level, wars over worship, and debates over deacons and elders. In Methodism it is pastors over parishioners. This researcher agrees with Hale, that this is just the symptom. The real situation is about the control in the church; who is going to run the church.

Hale points out problems that arise in every church and they are: conflict awaits the arrival of a new pastor, conflict with the staff, decline in membership, the pastor has undeveloped people skills, incompetent administration skills, and the list goes on, only to end up in being let go.¹⁹

The church is in need of liberation, setting the church free to build the kingdom of God. If the meaning of liberation theology is clear and allowed to function in the church, and given the position to set free people free from the bonds of unhealthy power, then the kingdom of God is being actualized.

¹⁸ Monty Hale, "Church Control is Top Reason for Forced Pastor Terminations in South Carolina," *The Courier* (July 8, 2010), accessed May 1, 2015, <https://baptistcourier.com/2010/07/church-control-is-top-reason-for-forced-pastor-terminations-in-south-carolina/>.

¹⁹ Hale, "Church Control."

Theodore Runyon explains how three types of liberation theology challenges unhealthy power and control on all levels in the church. First Black liberation theology challenges those who oppress and control people through political and economic means.

Next, the feminist theology stands in the halls of justice over the barriers of male dominance, then lastly, Runyon points out that Latin American theology calls those who use exploitation methods - groups that have benefits over other people, such as the wealthy and powerful, the higher class, and systems that control economic power.

Runyon points out even though these theologies all have a different area of interest, they all serve the vision of liberation and they all must come together to serve in the common tapestry of the vision of God, God's biblical vision for humanity and his kingdom.²⁰ Runyon points out John Wesley's view on liberation. John Wesley believes that justification sets up sanctification for the person to be transformed, which is God's divine plan. It is God's grace inviting that person into the kingdom, the church. Wesley believes that without this process redemption cannot be actualized. Sanctification operates on the same level of socialization.²¹

It follows that Wesley, unlike most eighteenth –century writers, does not view the kingdom of God as referring exclusively to heaven or to life after death. The first fruits of the kingdom are available now. “A society [is] to be formed . . . To subsist first on earth, and afterwards with God in glory. In some places Scriptures the phrase [kingdom of God] more particularly denotes that state of it on earth; in others, it signifies only the state of glory; but generally it includes both.” Therefore, when we pray “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,”²²

²⁰ Theodore Runyon, ed., *Sanctification and Liberation: Liberation Theologies in Light of the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), 9.

²¹ Runyon, *Sanctification*, 10.

²² Runyon, *Sanctification*, 10-11.

This means that all of humanity is called to do the will and the work of God's creation here on earth. When the church practices controlled religiosities, excluding or not recognizing the sanctification process that invites God's people into the image of God, then the kingdom building process becomes lost in the church. Runyon, Cone, and Wesley, all agree that liberation works for the common goal, allowing God's freedom in Jesus Christ to flow and grow through the church and community.²³

During the era of the Reformation period, Wesley challenged the Church of England with his vision that God invites all to participate in the church so as to build the kingdom. God welcomes the poor, the homeless, and children into God's mighty acts of liberation. When the Church of England - the elitist, the wealthy, and those who were in control of the church, refused to open their doors to the peasants and the marginalized, Wesley offered God's liberation outside the Church of England. Liberation theology believes in freedom for all, whether the person is in poverty, being manipulated, or under unhealthy power and control in the church. God is a God that shares God's power.

N. Graham Standish points out in his book, *Humble Leadership* that the root of our division is generational and stems back to where the apostle Paul confronted leaders in the Ephesus congregation as well as the churches in Corinth and Galatia. All of the early churches struggled with division and fighting among themselves, which led to a lack of harmony within the churches.

Standish also believes that the problem is with those who are leading. "Perhaps the biggest factor in this divisiveness is that our leadership generally lacks the humility

²³ Runyon, *Sanctification*, 11.

needed to unify. We live in a time in which we have an overabundance of arrogant leaders.”²⁴ The cockiness and the arrogance that leaders display show that their way is the only way, leaving no room for flexibility. Not only are they blocking the way of new visions, but they are also blocking God’s way. Their puffed up pride makes them believe that they are the only ones who know the truth and the way, and that they and no one else carry the light of Christ.²⁵

Paul’s understanding of gentleness and humility comes from humble leadership. Loving each other, demonstrating patience, and seeking every possible way to keep the Spirit of unity in the bond of peace. Therefore, unifying leadership, servant leadership and humble leadership all derive from Jesus Christ.

Humble leadership leads to unifying leadership and unifying leadership guides people to look for a common cause that is grounded in God’s goodness. These types of leaders are called to lay aside their own personal agendas, endeavors, and desires for power and control, and rise to fame.²⁶

When there is a lack of humble leadership from the leaders, the church sends out a distorted message when it comes to control verses authority. Dr. Leland Stauff in his book, *Power and Control: A Biblical Expose’ of a Frequently Ignored Problem in the Church*, points out nine different characteristics of people who operate in unhealthy power and control.

²⁴ N. Graham Standish, *Humble Leadership: Being Radically Open to God’s Guidance and Grace* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007), 92.

²⁵ Standish, *Humble Leadership*, 92.

²⁶ Standish, *Humble Leadership*, 92.

First, power people are always competing for recognition. They need to be right. They need to win the discussion at the cost of someone else. To possibly be seen as being wrong on some points of view, in their minds, is an indication of weakness. This trait is not uncommon to the church in the twenty-first century. The biblical character of King Saul was a prime candidate for this type of behavior. In 1 Sam. 18:6-9 Saul became very jealous of David's success. Jealousy is linked to competitiveness.

The second trait is that power people have trouble submitting. Stauff points out that Rick Warren's book *"The Purpose Driven Church"* would not sit well with people that operate under this trait because the focus is on the church and God's purpose for the church. The third trait is that power people are poor when it comes to delegating. Power people seem to find it hard working with other members of the church, especially when it comes to delegating authority. The fourth trait that Stauff points out is that power people do not listen very well. They are so into themselves that they block out others because it is all about them.

The fifth trait that Stauff talks about is power people taking advantage of other people. They use other people as their prey, only to gain more control to use for their purposes. The sixth characteristic is the spirit of being vindictive. Power people can be evil towards those that might disagree with them.

The seventh control factor is that controlling people are insecure. The more control they get, the more they want. It becomes a never ending desire. The eighth trait is that power people think of themselves as the person that will save the day; the savior complex. They seem to think that they are the only ones with the correct answer to the question, and they are the ones to save the project and the church from the problem. The

final trait is pride. Pride can lead towards power. Pride uses the word “I.” Pride and power are related like brother and sister.²⁷

Wayne Schmidt in his book *Power Plays* agrees with Dr. Stauff. Schmidt traces the genesis and the progression of power. Schmidt believes that power is all around us. It is a part of America’s fabric. For example, power plays are at work. Then they leave work and from work they enter into the home, and into parenting, then into the marriage and from the marriage into the church.²⁸

On the other hand, Dr. Stauff illustrates that the genesis of power and control starts at the adolescent age, then moves into adulthood, and from there to higher education, and also can be found on the field of sports. Media plays a part in this problem, too. Money also cannot be overlooked, because people use their wealth to influence their control over the church. And lastly, sin plays a part, from the fall of man in the garden.²⁹

We see the struggle for power in many biblical texts, such as in the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-8), and in Gen. 25:22 with Jacob and his brother Esau. Also, as this researcher stated in the biblical foundation paper, the zeal for control over God’s plan for humanity is found in the biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). John 18:1 and John 19:7-11 also show how power was used by corrupt leaders. This author agrees with both Schmidt and Stauff that power plays, or struggles, can spill over into parenting,

²⁷ Leland Stauff, *Power and Control: A Biblical Expose’ of a Frequently Ignored Problem in the Church* (Pittsburgh, PA: Red Lead Press, 2007), 29-41.

²⁸ Wayne Schmidt, *Power Plays: Overcome the Need for Control and Learn to Live with Strength and Integrity* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006), 16.

²⁹ Stauff, *Power and Control*, 1-6.

and that power and control is all around us even at birth. Kenneth C. Haugk points out in his book *Antagonists in the Church* that:

Oftentimes committed Christians (clergy and lay persons) possess the personality trait of altruism or selfless giving. Occasionally, this trait, which can be quite positive, can lead church leaders into over commitment or even messianic attitudes: “I am the fix-it person, I am the healer, I must do all the dirty, difficult or unpleasant tasks.” Deeply committed people often feel obligated to deal singlehandedly with the antagonist: “It is my problem, I have to be able to take it, I have to deal with it alone.”

When one individual assumes the whole burden of dealing with an antagonist, the result is rarely healthy. The obligation to deal with the situation properly resides in corporate leadership of the congregation and, to a lesser extent, in the congregation as a whole.³⁰

The author Haugk is of the same mindset as Stauff’s beliefs when it comes to identifying and understanding the person’s need to have power and control and the nine traits that identify this power. These two authors walk hand in hand with their beliefs.

Haugk also thinks on the same sentiment as Cone does when it comes to the theology of the church as being one body, which is the body of Christ. Haugk says that the importance of the body is seen and understood as more than the sum of its parts:

It resembles an organism more than an organization, pulsing with the very life of Jesus flowing through its members by means of the Holy Spirit. Antagonism is like a virulent disease in that body. A body cannot regard attack on a single part as an inconsequential threat requiring no response by other parts. Antagonists pose a threat not only to an isolated organ, but also to the entire organism, which suffers until the disease is overcome. The whole body must work to overcome it.³¹

Haugk also agrees with the apostle Paul, when Paul reminded and encouraged the early churches that the entire body must work together. In the 21st century church that

³⁰ Kenneth C. Haugk, *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 23.

³¹ Kenneth C. Haugk, *Antagonists*, 23-24.

means pastors, ministry leaders, and other laity. In order for the church to live out her true Christian meaning, and serve the social needs of the community, the church must act as one because the church was meant to represent Jesus Christ.

Since power and control are first cousins to conflict, Norma C. Everest in her book, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration*, gives a snapshot of what conflict looks like in seven different ways. Conflict can be confusing because there are different kinds of conflict. There is the intrapersonal conflict, meaning that nobody is perfect when it comes to decision making, being well-adjusted, or in great health. Conflict is always going on inside of ourselves.

Another conflict is the interpersonal conflict. That is the type of conflict that goes on between other people. Humanity goes back and forth with one another dealing with the issues of ministry, and many times people may feel that pastors are expected to take sides with them against their opponents. Knowing the difference between intra- and interpersonal conflict makes a world of difference in knowing how to approach the conflict at hand. Yet another conflict that arises in the church is over beliefs. The issue that drives the worship service. What is the DNA of the church? What is the church's theological, ecclesiological, and Christological role? How does the church understand God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit? How do they understand faith sharing, telling their story? Do the church leaders know that outreach includes moving towards social justice for the community, and allowing social justice to live out its meaning with the church's support?

Then there is the conflict over facts and truth. Not having the facts makes it hard to reveal the truth. But through careful conversation and getting the whole picture brought before the congregation, the church can gain a better understanding.

The fifth conflict that Everest exposes is the conflict over values – worth. People have different values. People see things differently and make choices based on their values. Even though church members all agree that God should be central in their lives, and they agree that the mission statement points the church in the direction that the church should be going, people still base their opinions off of their values.

The sixth conflict that Everest mentions is the conflict over goals – the mission. This includes how the church intends to fill the pews with its style of worship. The congregation may not agree with the methods, and the thought of reaching new people may mean that they do not look like us, they will not fit in, our budget will not allow it to happen, and the list goes on.

The last conflict is over means, or ministry. This conflict arises over the church choosing the ones who they want to serve in ministry. Ministry is a gift to and for the church from God. Ministry is God's way of allowing humanity to join in and become co-laborers with our neighbors and God. The body of Christ is made up of many different parts. All coming together to serve. The question then becomes, why all the desire for control, power, and conflict? Everest points out that it is because conflict instills a territorial nature within persons.

Conflict causes pastors, ministry leaders, and other laity to lay out boundaries in the church. When the church begins to see that all ministries are central to Jesus, there are no boundaries. God is not territorial. With Christ being the center, we can lift up and

celebrate all ministries, even though we may not be directly connected to a certain one.

God shares God's power to serve. So if one understands the invitation to serve, one should know how to confront the issues of unhealthy power and control.

Everest says that if one is to confront the issue of power, one must know that there are many kinds of power. She mentions various kinds of power:

Power of physical size, power of office, the power of experience, power of money, power of gender, race, class, power of education, power of voice, power of expertise, power of resources and the power of . . . What power do you have? How do you exercise it? What power intimidates you? Which kinds of power do you use to confront? Which kinds of power are you reluctant to use?³²

For Everest, knowing how to stand and confront the issues of power is vital, but control is a cousin to unhealthy power. First, she says that we are not omnipotent, but God is. However, as good stewards, God has entrusted humanity with certain responsibilities to carry out. God gave humanity dominion. Over time people have decided in their minds that it has been ordered by God to be domineering over people; having total say over people's lives, community, and church.

There is only one that holds that title dominus, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus controlled when he would walk through and engage in conflict. In Acts 2 the reader finds the people all together speaking in the language of those that were there, but they were mocked. All through the Epistles we see the church facing all types of conflict. The creeds were written because of conflict.³³ We see the following biblical account in Luke's gospel 4:28-30:

³² Norma Cook Everest, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 85.

³³ Everest, *Church Conflict*, 110-113.

All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Everest points out that Christians have an amazing propensity to engage in conflict. Many times the church has sought to control its people. The global church has faced forces that have tried to control Christian people. One wonders, “What is the nature of the church? How much control do Christian leaders have or should have?”³⁴

Bishop Robert Schnase, in his book *Just Say Yes*, gives the church ways of liberating the church and setting members free to do ministry. In his introduction, he writes that everybody is saying no in the church. Instead of saying yes, the traditions of the church have taught the leaders, pastors, and laity to say no. The church says no to new visions, pastors turn down laity, and existing long term members won’t accept new members. But Schnase invites the church into experiencing God’s liberation, and helps the church to become free to serve.³⁵

Kennon L. Callahan suggests that keys are required to have an effective church, and believes that strong leadership produces the drive that is needed to move the church in the right direction.

The power is neither dictatorial nor authoritarian, neither oppressive nor domineering. Rather, strong leadership generates power to effectively develop (1) specific concrete missional objectives, (2) pastoral and lay visitation, (3) corporate, dynamic worship, and (4) significant relational groupings. If a church could have only five of the twelve characteristics well in place, it would be

³⁴ Everest, *Church Conflict*, 113.

³⁵ Robert Schnase, *Just Say Yes: Unleashing People for Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), ix.

these first five that would deliver whichever of the remaining seven that would be important for the church to accomplish its mission in the world.³⁶

Ronald Richardson believes the power to create a healthy church is found in his book *Creating a Healthier Church, Family systems Theory, Leadership, and Congregational Life*.

Richardson believes that being different haunts everybody that walks into the church. There is no way around not facing being different in the church. Richardson believes that people coming into a church find it hard just being themselves, and that they have to check their true identity at the door. Some people feel that because they are different, it means that they can never get along in the church.

To a certain degree, opinions are not always a problem in the church and people can come to an agreement. But in most cases differences present challenges in relationships and in congregations. Differences can be unpleasant and cause one to think that they are too different to be able to come together and agree, or to simply get along with one another.³⁷

In some denominations, church officers and leaders are called “to study the peace and unity” of the church. The problem is that the way we usually understand “peace and unity” does not allow for the element of significant differences. If “peace and unity” means loss of identity and lack of conflict, then we will never be able to achieve this state in the church, and we as leaders are pursuing an impossible goal. One group in the church will always believe one thing while another group believes something quite different.³⁸

³⁶ Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1983), 41.

³⁷ Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership, and Congregational Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 54.

³⁸ Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church*, 55.

Douglas J Bixby writes that there are way too many fears in churches today.

Bixby argues that we concentrate on things that are not important, and the church's faith has become puny. Bixby believes the church needs to shift our focus from meetings and focus on ministry. Churches need to stop focusing on conflict in the church and concentrate on the community. To address this point, Bixby references Thomas Brandy from the United Church of Canada in his book *Moving off the Map*, who writes that the church needs to tear down the system and build systems that encourage and offer transformational change. The life of the church, the coming in and going out, as well as both planned and unplanned activities around ministry, must at some point be changed.

The key to developing a successful ministry is to get the people of your church excited about being involved with your ministries. With regard to church structure, we need to make sure that our systems are not keeping people from participating in our ministries. Simplifying our systems makes them more manageable. System should make us function better, not hinder us. We need to make sure that our systems are not getting in the way of what God is trying to accomplish through us and for us.³⁹

Benjamin E. Mays argues in his book, *The Negro's God*, that the central theme is around God's impartially and the unity of mankind. God is understood to be completely impartial, and God created all of humanity from one blood. Geographically there are no divisions that would separate our racial differences. All of humankind are united and tied to God. Humanity and God are one. Mays reveals God's passion and connectedness towards humanity.⁴⁰

³⁹ Douglas J. Bixby, *Challenging the Church Monster: From Conflict to Community* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2002), 31.

⁴⁰ Benjamin E. Mays, *The Negro's God: As Reflected in His Literature* (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1969), 162.

In conclusion, this researcher believes that the church has not functioned on behalf of the community. The church has distanced herself from the needs of those who are not like the long-term established members. The church has not opened up opportunity for the community to really know who God is. There has been an issue with control verses authority since the beginning. Most church leaders operate in an unhealthy control and power system, and without authority from God.

Systems are created to keep themselves in balance. Therefore, a toxic system will reject anything that is healthy; anything that comes into it, to challenge or to change it. Unhealthy churches are like the Dead Sea. Nothing grows in the Dead Sea; everything dies. Unhealthy churches kill any possible growth. Pastors, ministry leaders, and other laity have actually used the church for personal gain, distorting the real mission to which the church has been called. The church has been called to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

After careful research and study, this researcher discovered that egos have taken over the church in every imaginable way. Church leaders have allowed their egos to cause them to become territorial. Only certain people can do certain things in the church. This type of behavior stifles the possibility of any kind of unity in the church. This also shows a poor representation of the church, of God, and the purpose to which God has called the church into existence for the community.

In the black church, leaders and laity have reverted to using what was used on them. At one time the oppressor used ways of oppression on the individual in order to control them with power that was not healthy. Now the oppressed becomes the oppressor in the black church. Pastors and laity have switched roles and become the oppressor. For

now pastors, ministry leaders, and other laity have taken on a controlling attitude as to who can and cannot serve in the church, and what ministries are and are not allowed in the church.

This is not how Jesus Christ explains the kingdom of God, because God is not territorial. God shares God's sovereignty, and the scriptures teach the church to share in ministry. Scriptures such as Gen. 2:18 and John 17:22-23 give us an understanding of being one among many. Unhealthy power and the need to control has damaged many unchurched people. Selfishness and disunity have caused members to drift away from the church, never to return.

Jesus told Pilate that the only authority he had comes from God. Pilate had position, leaders have position. Jesus had authority, pastors have authority. The difference is when pastors and ministry leaders exercise their power under their own authority, then it becomes unhealthy. When pastors and laity exercise power under God's authority, then it becomes healthy.

This researcher believes that when church pastors and leaders get away from thinking that it is more important to serve in position, than to position themselves to serve, that is when the church can create ministry opportunities. Then a true relationship with church and community will take place. We as God's people bring a wide variety of diversity to the church with our political, theological, economical, and social beliefs. But when the church realizes that our differences are actually a gift to the church, this then equips the church to reach the different needs in the community.

Therefore, this DMin. project will offer leaders church, and laity ways to regain the church's true identity and connection with the community. This project will educate

leaders on the importance of promoting unity in the church, and how to recognize unhealthy power and control.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

As the researcher stated in the theological foundation paper, power and control comes from all walks of life. Unhealthy power and control comes from our upbringing, our political views, and our religiosities. Whether traditional, contemporary, or conservative, liberal or in the eye of the fundamentalist, the issue with power and control in the church stems from an ineffective and outdated leadership structure and a lack of accountability. Not having a healthy structure for those serving in leadership causes a destructive mantra for members and prospective members to grow in Christ. The barriers that live between unhealthy leadership and transformative leadership are a bureaucratic culture, embedded conflict, and personal constraints. All can hold the church hostage, and the struggle to reach new people for Christ eventually becomes frustrating.

Therefore, exposing and being cognizant of what others have done towards these issues of unhealthy power and control, while discovering its genesis, and how it finds its way into the church, is important to understand. Other scholars have made it possible to build on the foundation that has already been put into practice. It is the researcher's intent to reveal these models in the practice of ministry to expose new insights within the church, as well as other discipline models outside the church. It is the researcher's belief that it is important to discuss and be in dialogue with other scholars, theologians, and

ministry practitioners to build on what has been done in terms of confronting and solving these issues on unhealthy power and control.

Theoretical Models in Ministry

Emanuel Cleaver III in his book, *Pastor on Track*, believes that church leaders, board members, and pastors all have different rolls to operate in the church, and that the pastor has his own way of understanding his or her role. In most denominations both congregation and pastor have different opinions about their roles. Cleaver points out that when the pastor begins to focus on other ministerial tasks that others should be doing, that is when the pastor's leadership skills are clearly off track. When the pastor begins to serve in other areas of the church, the church can easily lose the identity of the call, the mission, vision, and the direction in which the church should be headed.

When the church or the pastor then loses its direction or focus, the church cannot be the authentic body that the creator intended for the body to be. In other words, when the leader or the church is uncertain about his or her role in the church, the results will bring confusion and chaos, and the church will suffer.¹

Without a strong leadership structure that will hold everybody accountable, the church will experience chaos and confusion, and then will cease being the pinnacle of God's plan. Cleaver believes that it is very important not only for the congregation to know how the pastor should function, but it is equally important for the pastor to know his or her role as a pastor when it comes to leading the church.

¹ Emanuel Cleaver, *Pastor on Track, Reclaiming Our True Role* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 3.

Therefore, Cleaver points out five essential functions that will help the church and the pastor to stay on track. The first role is that the pastor must cast the vision, next develop the staff and leaders around the vision, then lead the people, teach and preach, and lastly discern God's will.²

Cleaver believes that the church has lost its way because pastors and ministry leaders are not operating in the role in which God has ordered the church to function according to Ephesians 4:11. God has given gifts to the church in the structure of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These leaders have been set aside to lead the church.

"The office of pastor is meant to be a gift to the church, whereas laity are given gifts for the sake of the church."³ Cleaver makes it clear why there is so much chaos and demise in the twenty-first century churches. It is because the biblical model expressed in the scriptures for the church and the pastors is not being practiced. This then ushers in unhealthy power and control, confusion, and leaving the question to be answered, who is in control?

Cleaver believes that when the pastor leads, the church council governs, and the ministry leaders do the work of the ministry, using his five essential functions, this model will keep the pastor and the church on track.⁴

² Cleaver, *Pastor on Track*, 4.

³ Cleaver, *Pastor on Track*, 27.

⁴ Cleaver, *Pastor on Track*, 27-28.

Lovett H. Weems in his book, *Bearing Fruit*, believes as Cleaver does that laypersons and pastors are called to be fruitful for God in their roles. Weems points out two words that will guide the leader beyond his or her vision to point to God's vision for the church. These words are: so that. These two words are essential for the leader and for the church.

The so that model moves the mission and vision beyond egos, personal agendas, and unhealthy power and control. Another way that leaders are fruitful is through learning the story. Weems points out that the church has a story to tell, and the story has the power to encourage and prompt members to move towards the future. The story also encourages leaders to allow the story to be told so that its members can remember their history and how the history can still be active today.⁵

New members can benefit as well because the church's story becomes their story by stepping into their history. So Weems believes that a model for fruitful leadership for the church can come from learning the story and then telling the story. The church then begins to bear fruit through fruitful leadership.⁶ Weems suggests ways to make everyone a part of the church through themes:

- Make Christ the center of our lives
- Continue to make it a church at the center of the community
- Be willing to widen the circle
- Care for others

⁵ Lovett H. Weems, *Bearing Fruit: Ministry with Real Results* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 47.

⁶ Weems, *Bearing Fruit*, 49.

- Serve Christ

Weems refers to Steven Sample's, book, *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*, to show that it is important for the leaders to know the creation story. Sample points out that leaders should know the history of the organization that they are leading, such as how it began, the motivation that started the seed planters, the successes and why it is so significant today. Sample believes that the story should not be more than five minutes. This story should.

- be true
- appeal to church members as a story that honors their past
- appeal to those who the leader hopes will become part of the church
- emphasize that the church has changed over time while remaining true to core values, and
- engender pride in the past that makes hope in the future a foregone conclusion.⁷

Like Cleaver, Weems believes that groups, governing boards, church staff, and the members of the church must share the vision. It is imperative that the board members have a clear understanding of the vision of the church at all times. The vision should be shared among the groups.

With this model in place, one important outcome that can come from this model if it is done right, is that it allows relationships to form between the pastor and leaders. By revising the church's programs, by focusing on the mission of the church, all three

⁷ Weems, *Bearing Fruit*, 51.

groups will stay in step with each other. But if this procedure is overlooked, the relationship that pastor, leaders, and church members are trying to promote could turn for the worst. But on the other hand, the benefits of using this model could produce:

Pastor and staff time: The board could interpret to church members how the pastor and staff spend time and how such time allocations serve the ministry. Authority issues: Consensus forged during monthly meetings around ministry initiatives protects the pastor and staff from being seen as autocratic or working on personal agendas. Spiritual gifts: Clarity around goals and assignments of leadership encourages good use of everyone's gifts and abilities to focus in areas that she or he will pursue with great success. Role clarity: key leaders on the same page and avoid role conflict and confusion. Leadership discernment: the dialogue enables the church and the pastor to understand whether they have a good match regarding the interests, desires, and calling of the church and the calling of the pastor rather than dealing with such important questions through conflict and crisis. Unity in the body of Christ: Monitoring reports enable the church leaders to be engaged in the initiatives of church so that they can build consensus among the church as a whole. They enable strong team work among the staff, the governing board, and members of the congregation/ Spiritual conversations: By revisiting key initiatives informal conversation over the course of a year, the governing board and pastoral leaders take time at several points to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Goals and plans can then be adjusted for the greater faithfulness and fruitfulness.⁸

In the book, *Ten Prescriptions for a Healthy Church*, Bob Farr points out that leadership development is a vital part of church growth. Farr says if the board or council does not spend time on developing leadership and honing in on the skills by way of matching gifts to the various positions, then the possibility for solving problems and church growth becomes guess work and conflict will most likely produce an unhealthy atmosphere. Rather than putting people in leadership because personalities are the same,

⁸ Weems, *Bearing Fruit*, 69-71.

or the person is very popular in the church, or because of tradition and availability, the board or council should look for gifts when recruiting leaders for the church.⁹

This is the model that the United Methodist church uses for recruiting new candidates for leadership. The board that does it is called the Nominations and Leadership Development Team. This model comes from the *United Methodist Book of Discipline*, paragraph 258.¹⁰ This model requires members who are serving to rotate off after serving a three year term. This model could create problems because if no new members are coming into the church, then the ones who are serving in these positions will not allow persons to rotate off, which can create an unhealthy leadership structure.

What can happen next is that the three year rotation model could very well create cliques, a buddy system, or favorites. The process for leadership development is to plan, identify, raise up, and equip not only existing leaders but future leaders as well. The first step that is often overlooked is to plan the learning time together with both laity and pastors in the same room. This fosters a healthier relationship between laity and pastors right from the start. Farr also suggests for the leadership team to plan annual retreats. This creates opportunities for the group to come together, discuss, and develop future leaders for the church.¹¹

In the book *Crucial Conversations*, authors Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler point out how leaders can recognize when it is time to have crucial

⁹ Bob Farr and Kay Kotan, *Ten Prescriptions for a Healthy Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 79.

¹⁰ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2008*, (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008), 178-179.

¹¹ Farr, *Ten Prescriptions*, 89.

conversations. When leaders miscommunicate unhealthy power and control in the church it often leads to opposing opinions, strong emotions, and high stakes. The authors believe that by having a crucial conversation it can transfer hurt feelings and anger into neutral dialogue. Using crucial conversations for a leadership model will create a path of experiencing the least resistance among leaders, so that dialogue can happen between unhealthy leadership and healthy leadership, with the end result being that everybody wins.¹²

Anyone leading with power and control should automatically be held accountable. Robert Schnase points out in his book, *Seven Levers* that the model should have the tenets of being Christ centered, show signs of fruitfulness, demonstrate excellence, everyone is accountable, and collaboration needs to be infused into every board and committee gathering.¹³

Other models for building on and recognizing unhealthy power and control that have given birth to conflict are, *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*, by Jim Van Yperen. Yperen believes that complaints come from the surface and not the root, from where the problem really starts.

Yperen also believes that as long as we focus our attention on curing the symptom and not focus on the root, conflict will always be around. Conflict is buried and lives

¹² Kerry Patterson et al, *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2012), 28-30.

¹³ Robert Schnase, *Seven Levers: Missional Strategies for Conferences* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 94.

beneath the surface of any problem. Yperen points out that conflict is developed around four areas: cultural, structural, spiritual and theological.¹⁴

When authentic authority is absent from the core of the church's leadership, then conflict can easily spread throughout the church. According to Jackson W. Carroll authentic leadership in the church first starts with one being faithful to one's calling and having a true relationship with God. Members must first be willing to submit themselves to God's authority and God's purpose for the community.¹⁵

Carroll mentions that authority is hard and complicated to understand. Power in the church is to be seen and used in an authentic and legitimate way so that the congregation can participate with the core beliefs of the church. Demonstrating authentic authority means pointing the way, causing an effect, and organizing the congregation's actions and traditions so that they are seen as being healthy. When power is misused in the wrong way, the end results are conflict, causing division, and a lack of trust among the members.¹⁶

Usually power in the life of the church has been regarded and understood in the beliefs about God, as we understand God and Jesus Christ in many historical and personal events. The very source that these beliefs rest on is the power that leaders practice, their authentic leadership in the church. The ultimate belief in God and God's plan for humanity comes from the congregation's obedience towards God and God's

¹⁴ Jim Yperen, *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2002), 27.

¹⁵ Jackson W. Carroll, *As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 35.

¹⁶ Carroll, *As One with Authority*, 37.

leaders.¹⁷ Therefore, unhealthy power and control happens when people are appointed to positions and titles with authority, and begin to abuse that authority for self-righteousness and personal gain.

Unhealthy power and control stems from various walks of life. One that sticks out is when people with power practice using it over others. Also unhealthy power can come from the pew. Abusives power happens when laity abuse other laity or the pastor's sacred mission to carry out God's plan for the church.

Kenneth C. Haugk has identified that laity who use unhealthy power and control on other people are known as antagonists. Antagonists can destroy the sense of God's mission in the church and the people who have been chosen to carry out the mission. These persons pick on and destroy pastors, board members, ministry leaders, and congregations. They go to the extreme to make demands that are impossible to fulfill. They leave a trail of disruption and toxic evidence that leave scars.¹⁸ The antagonist works to bring down instead of building up. Their targets are generally the leaders in the church. Therefore, Haugk points out six steps on how to deal with the antagonist in order to minimize and or eliminate the destruction that they bring.

The steps are: (1) do your job as best as you can and be the best leader that you can be, (2) do not stop the ministry while exposing the antagonist, (3) do not invest more time than needed into exposing and calling out the antagonist, (4) act with authority, do not show a sign of weakness, (5) keep a journal of the disturbances and where they took

¹⁷ Carroll, *As One with Authority*, 43.

¹⁸ Kenneth C. Haugk, *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 29-30.

place, and (6) remember that there is no such thing as a conflict-free church, it is only a myth. As long as there are people in the world, problems will continue to exist.¹⁹

The congregation can come together to form a phalanx. The Greek understanding of phalanx means a well-armed group that stands shoulder to shoulder forming a wall that cannot be penetrated. In order for the phalanx to work and realize success, every leader will have to function consistently as a whole. The weakness of one leader can destroy the team.²⁰

In G. Lloyd Rediger's book, *Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations under Attack*, Rediger's definition of a clergy killer is one who targets pastors to do harmful and deceitful acts to a degree where it kills his or her spirit. These are people with gripes and misguided personal goals. They are divisive, determined, destructive, and deceitful and if left alone they are dangerous. They can show themselves as pious and holier than anyone else in the congregation, and pretend that they are there to save the church. The most advanced pastor cannot stop the attack. At best, what can be done is to change the way that the pastor thinks.²¹

Rediger gives some suggestions for combatting antagonists. Pastors should know and accept that denominational structures cannot step in and save them. Study the signs that say danger. Do not be quick to react but be proactive. Build up relationships in the

¹⁹ Haugk, *Antagonists in the Church*, 124.

²⁰ Haugk, *Antagonists in the Church*, 153.

²¹ G. Lloyd Rediger, *Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 8-10.

church. Be aware of the fact that mental disorder and evil exist in the church, and know that attacks will have an effect on the congregation²²

Theoretical models from other Disciplines

It is the researcher's intent to seek out other disciplines outside the practice of ministry and to investigate issues that will address unhealthy power and control. It is the researcher's goal to be in dialogue with the sociologist, the psychologist, and the business person to see what has been done in terms of solving this topic on unhealthy power and control. In his book, *Control: The Basis of Social Order*, sociologist Paul Sites argues:

We intend to show that the most fundamental component in individual, and social life is that of control; that the individual, either on his own or in coalition with others, attempts to control the situational context by controlling the behavior of others as well as his own, thus making control the most important dynamic of social as well as individual life.²³

Sites argues that power and control is connected to everything humanity does in life. In other words it is a way of the social life. Sites goes on to say that there is a basic internal instinct that drives humanity to behave the way that humanity does. The functionalist believes that the individual behaves a certain way because he or she was taught by parents or others around him or her. Sites goes on to say that there is no big change in understanding the way that the individual acts because of a natural desire. There is nothing embedded that influences a person to act according to their environment.

²² Rediger, *Clergy Killers*, 134.

²³ Paul Sites, *Control: The Basis of Social Order* (New York, NY: Dunellen Publishing Company, 1973), 1.

Therefore, Sites argues with the functionalist view on this understanding, so he suggests using the fundamental process of control that leads to a way of social life, and replace the adaptation theory as a way of understanding control. But Sites does not overlook that if the individual has a need to control the environment, then there must be some significant reason for this desire.

Sites believes that in order for the individual to obtain gratification the individual will need to control the environment. Sites also points out that there are outside needs of a certain social order, and needs that are within a certain social order. For every need, whether inside or outside the social order, the individual will still have very few choices in most cases. Sites argues “Unless human needs can be seen as standing outside society, reasoning in terms of needs tends to be circular and we end up with no explanation at all.”²⁴

Human behavior has exposed the need to control through certain activities. Anxiety, insecurity, and a loss of identity lead the theorist to understand that the individual yearns to have security and to belong and be accepted in the community. When humanity suffers from a loss of identity, then a loss of identity will lead to boredom, which invites the theorist to discuss a need to bring about activity. “They merely experience a yearning for something which they do not have, a feeling which leaves them with a feeling of incompleteness and frustration in their daily lives.”²⁵

The environment (both physical and social) must be controlled if the individual is to maintain the possibility of need gratification and self-maintenance; and it is man’s control possibilities, coupled with inventiveness, which has allowed him to

²⁴ Sites, *Control*, 3.

²⁵ Sites, *Control*, 8.

construct many and varied ways of gratifying his needs. But this is only half the story, for we would hold that it is the very existence of needs in man which make society possible. That is, if the individual did not have needs, others would have little possibility of controlling his behavior. It is the individual's needs, then, which makes it necessary for him to attempt control of his environment and at the same time permit the possibility of his being controlled by others, thereby making society possible.²⁶

Cultures are always taking on a different shape day by day because the needs of new generations change, they are either reaffirmed or destroyed.²⁷ "If the same culture emerges for the new generation, it does so because older forms continue to be useful in the satisfaction of individual and/or collective needs; and we would expect a high degree of continued usefulness because of the socialization and other interaction processes."²⁸

Another discipline that the researcher will be in dialogue with is that of psychology. Sites examines the mechanisms that Freud uses to defend his position on control. Sites illustrates two reasons for doing this, one is to show the control that is a present factor from within the individual from a psychological view, and the other is to reveal how the social and psychological control mechanisms parallel to the individual feelings or interest. In other words, there is a strong interaction between the social control and the psychological control that stands out in the person.²⁹

Sites points out that while he and other socialists agree with some of Freud's beliefs on the issue of control, they do not agree on all of Freud's theory. For Freud the person is not just a person with no feelings, totally without life waiting to be guided by

²⁶ Sites, *Control*, 10.

²⁷ Sites, *Control*, 12.

²⁸ Sites, *Control*, 12.

²⁹ Sites, *Control*, 22.

society. Freud believes that the person is not inanimate but that the person is psychologically active and capable of having instinctual energy to function.³⁰

In the socialization process, the orientation of control that parents use on their children later develops within the child and soon after emerges out of the child. Later the child uses what was used on them when interactions take place with others around them. It is safe to say that the child develops a need to control. Gratification is connected to this need and all other needs as well. If all needs were met, then there would be no desire for the individual to want to control.³¹ Sites gives eight different needs that emerge out of the individual:

A need for response, a need for security, a need for recognition, a need for stimulation, a need to be seen as rational (and for rationality itself), and a need to control. The relationship among these various needs is extremely complex. The last four needs emerge because the first four, which emerge out of the necessary dynamics of the socialization process, are not and cannot be immediately and consistently satisfied.³²

Sites explains that the individual's control is viewed through the ego concept. John and Elaine Cumming define an ego as "...an internal representation of a constellation of events experienced as part of an environment with a specific affective tone."³³ Sites wants to extend the definition to join together both social control and psychological orientations. Therefore, both psychological and social control orientation is understood like this:

³⁰ Sites, *Control*, 23.

³¹ Sites, *Control*, 43.

³² Sites, *Control*, 43.

³³ Sites, *Control*, 53.

An ego set is an internal representation of a constellation or sequence of events experienced as part of an environment with a specific affective tone and the controls, both social and psychological, formed in relation to that environment. These ego sets are constructed as the individual's general makeup do not change. If a change occurs in either, we can expect a change in the set or combination of sets.³⁴

Sites further points out that the person can control self and the facts surrounding the person within certain boundaries can build his own reality and his behavior toward it. Since he or she can build it, he or she can control it. But the limits of the control and building have different time, place and reciprocal process. Therefore, within the boundaries the person can experiment with reality and also build it and then control it. Many realities place boundaries on the person's social control abilities. For example, how the person sees themselves and the situation, or how others, in a precise way, view him or her, in the power and control situation.³⁵

Psychologist, Dr. Les Carter, points out in his book that imperative people are those who must be in control. Carter writes that people who need to be right are most likely to be imperative people. His definition is "those whose need for control disrupts their closest relationship."³⁶ Imperative folks have a very strong desire for control, and they may not be cognizant of operating in the need to be in control. Carter points out two types of people whose personalities can be considered to be imperative people. The A type is people who go without stopping whatever project or task that is given to them.

³⁴ Sites, *Control*, 53.

³⁵ Sites, *Control*, 56.

³⁶ Les Carter, *Imperative People: Those Who Must be in Control* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 14.

Type B is the people who are quiet and their personalities are more laid back and they operate their treatment of control in silence.³⁷

These two personalities have common and noticeable traits. Carter points out seven traits that can be easily identified. They allow work to dominate over relationships. The imperative person cannot accept other ideas over their ideas. They are always in control over their lives. They feel that it is their responsibility to do something. It is hard for them to admit their weakness. They do not like it when emotions get out of control and when people make mistakes, they get annoyed.³⁸

Carter writes that thoughts are fueled by emotions and emotions can control your actions. Worry, fear, anger, and false guilt, are markers that feed into emotions and ones that needs to be controlled. Most people go through this once in a while, but a person with a controlling personality will experience it more often. The author mentions that anger is part of the fabric of life, and it is called normal anger.

No one can escape anger. It is natural for someone to defend one's needs that are personal, such as respect for that which one believes. But when anger leads to consistent hatred, and continuous bitterness towards a certain individual, then that person's emotions become out of control. When anger is shown, then the person has an option to show forgiveness or continue to stay buried in anger.³⁹

³⁷ Carter, *Imperative People*, 15.

³⁸ Carter, *Imperative People*, 33.

³⁹ Carter, *Imperative People*, 42.

Carter has created a model for his readers to see if they are imperative thinkers when it comes to anger. Things to look for:

1. I become irritated about petty matters and nonessential issues.
2. When people annoy me, I punish them by giving them the silent treatment.
3. I often procrastinate to get back at someone who is trying to tell me what to do.
4. I sometimes use a pleading tone of voice to get others to do things my way.
5. I think about my unpleasant experience over and over again, feeling that the other person should not have responded that way.
6. I use sarcasm or humor to disguise how upset I am by some issues or experiences.
7. I sometimes state my convictions in ways that may seem harsh to other people and even critical of them.
8. I sometimes hold grudges.
9. When someone asks me to do something I do not want to do. I make a halfhearted effort.⁴⁰

Using this model to quiz oneself could possibly stop the aggression and allow the individual to see that this is how imperative thinkers think and what unresolved anger leads to. Carter also points out that when fear is not addressed properly, fear can cause people to turn inward and become defensive and begin to blame the other person.⁴¹

Worry is another important indicator in which imperative people get caught up. The person can get so caught up in what should or should not happen, that soon after they become depressed they almost always assume the worst will always occur. Worry is an indicator of an unhealthy thinker.⁴²

Carter mentions false guilt as the last of the four indicators. False guilt promotes an inner destructive way of thinking. No one is perfect so guilt is an expected result of

⁴⁰ Carter, *Imperative People*, 44.

⁴¹ Carter, *Imperative People*, 46.

⁴² Carter, *Imperative People*, 52-53.

imperative thinking. But true guilt is healthy, which means that the individual believes that forgiveness is available. The individual can accept the imperfections and mistakes, and see themselves as not perfect but working towards perfection. Carter gives the readers, as well as the researcher, a model for recognizing imperative thinkers through quizzes after each chapter in the book. He asserts that our imperative nature can be an asset when we focus more on relationships than performance.

John Maxwell has been identified as the number one leader in business by the American Management Association and the world's most influential leadership expert. In 1995 Maxwell shared with his readers how he approaches the topic of leadership. Maxwell asks the question, do you have blind spots? If the leader's response was no, then the leader should know just where to start. Every leader should realize that he or she will have a blind spot or two, meaning that we do not know what we do not know.

But what happens when a leader has blind spots? It affects so many more people than the leader alone. It can have a far-reaching impact—on the leader, his or her followers, and the entire team, department or organization.⁴³

Maxwell writes his definition of a blind spot; “an area in someone's life in which he continually fails to see himself or his situation realistically. This unawareness often causes great damage to the person and those around them”⁴⁴ Leaders that exhibit blind spots look like this. Their perspective is narrow. Larry Stephens once said, “If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.”⁴⁵

⁴³ John Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots,” *John Maxwell on Leadership*, September 22, 2015, accessed April 27, 2016, <http://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog/leadership-blind-spots>.

⁴⁴ Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots.”

⁴⁵ Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots.”

Leaders naturally are programmed to move quickly to solve the problem, but moving hastily without spending the proper amount of time can be a bad move. Maxwell writes that leaders should learn to hold back their zeal to want to move forward. If the leader steps back when faced with a new situation, stepping back will allow the leader to research the problem, and to give it a more thorough and careful solution that speaks to the situation. This way it will be less of their feelings being involved.⁴⁶

Maxwell points out another blind spot that leaders exhibit and that is insecurity. Insecurity is the leading trait that causes leaders to tend to think of themselves first. But leadership in of itself is about thinking of others outside of themselves. This blind spot is hard for leaders to recognize. It requires the leader to step back and take a long hard look at themselves. Maxwell writes that in order for the leader to heal from this, the leader should seek help from a counselor or mentor to overcome their insecurities.

Maxwell identifies the symptoms that leaders exhibit under the influence of insecurity:

- Difficulty giving credit to others
- Hoarding information
- Limiting followers' exposure to other leaders
- Feeling threatened by growth of others
- Micro-managing ⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Maxwell, "Leadership Blind Spots."

⁴⁷ Maxwell, "Leadership Blind Spots."

Maxwell reminds his readers “Remember, you can’t lead people if you need people. Or if you need to control them.”⁴⁸ Another blind spot that Maxwell points out is when the ego is out of control. The greatest enemy for the leader is pride.

Pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes. Like insecurity, pride makes the leader all about himself, rather than those he leads. It is the opposite of humility. A prideful leader tends to blame others, live in denial, and be closed-minded and rigid. This results in low morale among followers.⁴⁹

Maxwell writes, the best medicine to overcome pride is having a feeling of appreciation. When the leader understands that he or she cannot claim the success for ones gifts because gifts are given, this leads to showing humility and then the leader is able to give honor where honor is due and accept correction when correction is needed.⁵⁰ The last blind spot that Maxwell points out is when character is missing. With talent most people succeed to the top, but those who fail to develop strong character fail to stay at the top. Without strong character leaders cannot go further. To go further you must first look at yourself. In other words one needs to compare what you say to what you do. When they fail to line up that shows a lack of character. Character will become strong when your values, feelings, and thoughts are all on one accord.⁵¹

Maxwell concludes by saying that there are many more blind spots that affect all of us. But the ones mentioned are the ones that are common and are mostly found to be the ones that do the most damage to the leadership. Taking a self-examination is key for

⁴⁸ Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots.”

⁴⁹ Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots.”

⁵⁰ Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots.”

⁵¹ Maxwell, “Leadership Blind Spots.”

leaders to consider to see if the leader possesses one or more of these traits. One might ask a friend, colleague, or a family member for their views on the issue. If that causes a sense of fear then the leader might want to look at the issue of insecurity.⁵²

Maxwell leaves his readers and the researcher with this: taking the self-exam is a good investment in developing one's leadership skills and bringing a solution to solving blind spots. The leader will improve his or her human behavior and will increase productivity for everyone on the team. Blind spots can tear down a team when the leader's eyes are closed, but when their eyes are open the team will rise to a new level.⁵³

Another discipline the researcher found to be significant and relevant to the project is servant leadership in business. Robert K. Greenleaf in his book, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, writes that businesses are more willing to step out now and try new things that will cause their leaders to try and demonstrate better ethics for their companies and organizations. Greenleaf points out that businesses in 1958 and 1974 had something in common; it was a call to do things with a goal to do those things with excellence. So businesses were not only expected to come up with goods that are better, they were expected to become great social assets for the organization.⁵⁴

Greenleaf writes that the problem is not so much with the business but it is with the attitudes, expectation, and concepts pertaining to the business in society's views.

⁵² Maxwell, "Leadership Blind Spots."

⁵³ Maxwell, "Leadership Blind Spots."

⁵⁴ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977), 147.

Business institutions are not well-liked by churches, universities, government and social agencies. There is no love lost between these institutions and businesses.⁵⁵

Business, despite their crassness, occasional corruption, and unloveliness, must be loved if they are to serve us better. They are much too large a presence in the lives of all of us to have them in our midst and not serve us better. But how, one may ask, can one love this abstraction called the corporation? One does not! One loves only the people who are gathered to render the service for which the corporation is enfranchised. The people are the institution.⁵⁶

Churches are expected to have that same philosophy. Leadership for Greenleaf starts with servanthood, so then those who lead must demonstrate service for the people with whom they are in contact. Those whom the leaders serve must be loved, and those that are receiving service should demonstrate love as well. Both groups are interacting with one another on a regular basis.

Therefore, ethics and manipulation play a big part in the understanding of service. Manipulation means management; they both have the root word manus, which means hand, which implies designing other's destinies. Greenleaf points out that this has been a problem because manipulation is understood as moving one without people fully understanding what is going on. It is only recently that management has come into the picture and has been seen as legitimate.⁵⁷ We are now in a period of change regarding power and control, as institutions try to frame what is best when it comes to leading others.

⁵⁵ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 149.

⁵⁶ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 149.

⁵⁷ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 149- 150.

The researcher has presented several theoretical models for a healthier leadership structure that will hold pastors, ministry leaders, and laity accountable to equip the church for God's mission. In this study the researcher has learned from other scholars, theologians, and ministry practitioners that without a healthy structure, the church and the leaders can easily fall into a spirit of unhealthy power and control.

Therefore, this theoretical study is foundational to the researcher's project for examining, exposing the lack of structure, and the lack of accountability that feeds unhealthy power and control in the church. Through this theoretical study the researcher has benefited from other scholars, theologians, and leaders through their suggested work that has already been laid on what the church can do to minimize and recognize the causes of unhealthy power and control in the church. This theoretical research will modify the existing structure and leadership process and seek to improve it by implementing a new, up-to-date process that will show accountability and transformation. It will invite leaders, pastors, and laity into a healthier atmosphere that will build up the body of Christ instead of tearing it down.

This theoretical study is foundational for the researcher's DMin project because it will open up the vault in the church where unhealthy power and control has ruled, and expose how the church has failed to be obedient by operating with the lack of healthy, or a non-existing structure. This study was beneficial and it presents opportunities for the church to examine and sharpen their leadership skills, and become more accepting, loving, and inviting. But also it demonstrates the importance of creating a strong structure in leadership that mandates accountability from pastors, ministry leaders, and laity. Therefore, through this theoretical model, the researcher will impress upon the

congregation that the church must seek to meet the needs of an ever-changing community to do God's mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

After engaging in a critical study and learning about the history and background of this context, the analysis and results made it apparent that the way that the church practiced ministry was not healthy. Its parts, such as, pastors, ministry leaders, and ministers, were far from demonstrating healthy power and control in the church.

It is evident that in its 90 years of its history, the church has clearly missed the mark when it comes to inviting the community to share in God's glory. Those that make it past the gatekeepers were restricted from participating in ministry. It is evident that the church does not share the power that Christ gave to the church.

The church did not realize that the ministries of the church are designed to offer power to those who are seeking to have a relationship with God. And that power when applied in a grace-filled way, will transform people who are broken, marginalized, and ostracized. In other words, those who are the least, last, and the lost.

The members in this context had turned their heads and backs on the community and one another. Family members fought and jockeyed for power and control. As a whole, the historic church has been struggling with unhealthy power and control since its conception.

It is the researcher's discovery from this critical study that this problem has been often overlooked and ignored. Another observation that the researcher discovered is that this need for power and control is like a living organism that breeds and produces an offspring that can give birth to a spirit that produces little accountability or no accountability at all. Another offspring that unhealthy power and control produces is when the church has no leadership structure. Without structure and accountability, unhealthy power and control will eventually cause the church to decline.

Therefore, this project will bring a self-awareness to the church and its parts. The pastors, ministers, and ministry leaders will be able to understand that when the leadership of the local church is trained to recognize and understand the effects of healthy power in the church culture, it will impact church life.

It is a natural feeling; power and control is connected to everything humanity does in life. In other words, it is a way of the social life. There is a basic internal instinct that drives humanity to behave the way that humanity does. There is a need to be in control, and humanity needs to fuel the fire called power and control. Therefore, this project will educate through a process that will:

- Define what control is.
- Identify the nature or the driving force behind the issues of control.
- Expose and name the symptoms behind control.
- Take a look at how control can destroy the church.
- Expose and demonstrate how leaders have misused their power and control.
- Discover ways of learning to let go of unhealthy power and control.

- Invite the church to look at issues of control through the lens of the bible. What does the bible say about control? How our history exposes unhealthy power and control.
- Heal from the spirit of unhealthy power and control.
- Expose what unhealthy control looks like and what healthy control looks like.
- Look at strong models of accountability and leadership structure.

Methodology

The intent of the project is to teach the church and the leaders how to address the issue of unhealthy power and control in the local church. The method that the researcher used was the qualitative approach, using some quantitative measures. The researcher selected a core group of sixteen people. This action research was based on providing a pre-test and four workshops in a span of four weeks, one workshop per week. The workshops were one hour and forty five minutes each.

The core group was given group activities and handouts during the four weeks. The workshops ended with scenarios that allowed persons to identify the use of unhealthy power and control within the scenario. In the fourth week the core group was given a post-test to evaluate and measure the effects of the information that had been given. The post-test questions were the same as the pre-test questions. The researcher used the Likert scale to measure the data, using the following variables: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree for the core group testing. The second way of

measuring the project results was through preaching a sermon series using Genesis 4:1-15; 11:1-9 and John 18:1; 19:7-11.

The researcher developed three questions that asked the participants to engage the text and to seek out the issue of unhealthy power and control within text. Then the group was asked to answer the questions to the best of their ability. The final way of testing the hypothesis was through one-on-one interviews. The researcher asked the participants to answer three questions centered on the issue of power and control in the local church.

Each participant was given a pre-test to take. The information stated while power and control are classically different in definition, the two terms will be used interchangeably in the survey, with the understanding that power and control can be healthy or unhealthy, positive or negative. The participants were given instructions to complete the following survey based on their experience with power and control in their relationship, job/school, and church.

The participants in the core group were comprised of eight males and eight females. Their ages ranged from early to mid-twenties, a few are in their mid-sixties and others ranging in their late seventies.

Implantation One

Workshop Instrumentation

The pre-test was designed with ten questions for the participants to answer. They had the option to choose from five categories: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Question 1. In social settings do you act superior, yet feel inferior? The study showed that 0% strongly agreed, while 6% agreed, 31% were neutral, 38% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed. The majority disagreed by saying no they do not act inferior.

Questions 2. Is it difficult for me to listen quietly when someone is expressing an opinion with which I disagree? 0% strongly agreed, but 19% agreed, 25% were neutral, 19% disagreed, and 38% strongly disagreed.

Question 3. I deliberately avoid people who are as strong willed as I am. 6% of the sixteen answered strongly agreed, 0% agreed, 12% were neutral, 44% disagreed, and 38% strongly disagreed.

Question 4. I know some of the characteristics of a healthy leader. 44% strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 12% were neutral, 6% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

Question 5. I can recognize abusive power in the church. 32% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 6% was neutral, 12% disagreed, and no one strongly disagreed.

Question 6. I know some of the traits of those who need to be in control. 6% answered strongly agreed, 88% agreed, 6% was neutral, no one disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

Question 7. I am able to identify sources of control in the church. 19% strongly agreed, 62% agreed, 19% were neutral, no one disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

Question 8. I know the effects of family dynamics in the congregation. 25% strongly agreed, 63% agreed, 12% were neutral, no one disagreed, and no one strongly disagreed.

Question 9. I submit to the authority of the church. 12% strongly agreed, 70% agreed, 12% were neutral, 6% disagreed, and no one strongly disagreed.

Question 10. I know what healthy power and control looks like in a church setting. 25% strongly agreed, 57% agreed, 12% were neutral, 6% disagreed, and no one strongly disagreed.

The researcher had four goals for the core group to take away:

- To be able to recognize the difference between healthy and unhealthy power and control.
- Know the effects of unhealthy power and control on a congregation.
- To be able to identify sources of control in the local church.
- To know some of the characteristic of healthy power and leadership.

Syllabus

SESSION 1

Overview of the program

Introduction to what power and control is; constructive vs destructive

Examples of healthy and unhealthy power and control

SESSION 2

Where do you see control? Identifying places of control.

Book: *Creating a Healthier Church*, Ronald W. Richardson

Family systems and toxic systems Patriarch, Matriarch

On the Job/Society

Cliques, triangles,

In the bible

SESSION 3

Imperative people - people who need to be in control

Book: *Imperative People* by Dr. Les Carter; *Power and Control* by Dr. Leland Stauff

Abusive power and control in the church

Video: Clergy Killer

SESSION 4

Characteristics of what healthy leadership structure looks like

Book: *Creating a Healthier Church; 10 Prescriptions for a Healthy Church*

Becoming a better leader

Humility

Integrity

Video: Redeeming Power

Post-test

Communion

Session One

Agenda

Workshop on Unhealthy Power and Control

Overview of the Project

Introduction to Power and Control

Welcome

Prayer

Introduction of the Guest Speaker

Constructive vs Destructive

Closing Remarks

Prayer

Session 1 - In session one the researcher invited a guest speaker from a different denomination to share how unhealthy power and control operates from a different context. The guest speaker was given thirty minutes to share challenges, concerns and ways to approach unhealthy power and control through Christian education.

The guest speaker was also prepared to define unhealthy power and control. After the guest presentation, the presenter asked for discussion on how did the guest handle the power and control issues in her setting? Did anyone leave the church? How long has the issue been an issue? And did the presenter walk into that environment?

The group was satisfied with their answers. Although one or two of St. Andrew's core group were a little surprised that the presenter would allow a couple of the church's, long term members to leave without trying to persuade them to stay.

Then the group was led into the second phase of the project, the workshop. The core group was given twenty minutes to have a discussion about what power and control is. They were to talk about constructive versus destructive, and give some examples of power and control in various places such as the work place, schools, sports, homes, and churches.

The group broke up into groups of three. The group agreed to designate a scribe and a table captain for each table and that captain would present for that table. Each

group also agreed that they would rotate scribes and table captains throughout the remaining time during the project's workshop.

The group discussion was on how the misuse of power and control can cripple and destroy homes, workplaces, and churches. The group all agreed that this has been an ignored problem in the church. Some went as far as to say that they believe that is the reason that it is so hard for the church to attract guests, and even to get guests to remain as members.

Others were curious to find out where power and control come from. The group agreed that power and control is in all of us. It is in us to strive to do well on the job, work place, and in sports. It is because we get rewarded with promotions, raises, recognition, employee of the month plaques, special parking, and a pat on the back. And so there lies the genesis of power and control.

The group agreed that if they examine their actions and beliefs regarding the use of power and control, that they would be less likely to use controlling tactics again. The group believed that the use of power to manipulate others is wrong, yet we still misuse power and tolerate other's misuse of power. We simply do not align our actions with our beliefs.

The group also gave some examples of unhealthy power and control versus healthy. They agreed that unhealthy looks like this: manipulation, retaliation, punishment, position, competitiveness, attention, always having to be right. A good example of that is David and Saul. Saul had difficulty submitting, he was a poor delegator, took advantage of people, and was vindictive, insecure, had a savior complex, and pride.

They agreed that healthy looks like this: Mother Teresa, mutually set goals, shared expectation, trust and support, respect, non-threatening behaviors. One group felt that 1 Corinthians 12:7, 12-13, 27; and 2 Corinthians 5:10 are all good examples of healthy control in any setting.

The group felt that this was a much needed project, but not only that it was very much needed, but that this was right on time since the church now had a new pastor, and was preparing for a major renovation in the Sanctuary, along with other changes being made. The group believed that this project came at a great time for the life of the church.

Next, the project workshop led the group into the last event for the day. The group was given a scenario based on power and control. The assignment: (1) the groups were told to select a time keeper, a recorder, and a reporter; (2) read the scenario; (3) discuss and record the problem; (4) list the tactics of power and control used in the scenario; and (5) record and report your solutions.

The group found the scenario exciting and relatable to how St. Andrew acts sometimes. Everybody had something to contribute to the scenario, even the reserved ones that did not engage too much unless someone called on them to expound. The results from this project's first workshop ended up with the core group saying that they felt that the church has not handled the issues of power and control in a positive and healthy way.

Each participant had something to take away. One person said that it is hard to conform to authority. Another one said that this small group activity brought out different opinions about how to solve issues with power and control in the church. Another group member said that when leadership checks out chaos checks in.

The majority felt that the first project's workshop was a definite positive move. Everyone's thinking was on the same level. One participant expressed that she had never seen so many people thinking on the same level. Another member of the group mentioned that power and control can destroy all the good things that one is trying to accomplish in the church, and that it can make people not like a person or cause hard feelings towards that person.

Another group member mentioned that all leaders should be required to go through the workshops, then monitor how they handle power and control. Another participant pointed out that he learned the difference between unhealthy power and control, and healthy power and control.

The discussion led the group to identify the role of the church and how leaders need to learn how to communicate in order to build the kingdom. Another person said that power and control can give the perception of who is right or who is wrong, which should and could lead people to have honest discussion around the issue of unhealthy power and control. Participants agreed that the project's first session led the group to believe that everyone can knowingly and unknowingly participate in unhealthy power and control. The information given can be used to the church's advantage over unhealthy power and control. Another person from the core group pointed out that with all the uses of power and control, communication between parties can prevent future conflict.

The project's first workshop did exactly what the researcher intended it to do, and that was to get the group to open up and talk about the elephant that has been in the room for years. To get them to know the difference between what healthy power and control looks like versus unhealthy power and control.

Session Two

Agenda

Where Do We See Unhealthy Power and Control?

Welcome

Prayer

Introduction of the Guest Speaker

Identifying Places of Control

Closing Remarks

Prayer

The second workshop was given to the core group two weeks later. The workshop topics: Where do you see control? Identify places of control, and where do we see unhealthy power and control in the bible? A thirty minute presentation was given by a corporate executive, the guest speaker. The presenter provided information as to how unhealthy power and control operates in the workplace.

After the presentation from the guest presenter there was a time for questions and answers. The group quickly identified and paralleled corporate America's issues with the church. They noticed that their behavior was no different from corporate America in some ways.

The group then examined different scriptures in the bible where unhealthy power and control operated. This exercise led them to Genesis 3:4 the fall of humanity, Genesis 4:3-5 Cain and Abel's story, Genesis 11:1-9 the Babel story, Genesis 25:22 Jacob and Esau's story, Genesis 37 Joseph's dream, and Exodus 1:8 Israel's oppression.

This review of the scriptures really opened the group's eyes and got them to take a closer look at how the church has been operating towards themselves and others. Next the researcher presented how to identify cliques and triangles in the church. The presentation asked the questions:

- What is a triangle?
- Why do we make triangles?
- How to spot a triangle.
- How to handle triangles by repositioning.
- Triangles and leadership in the church.

The group was given a handout with five questions to complete. The questions were: (1) What are some particularly prominent or visible triangles in the church? What sort of anxieties might they be helping to keep underground? (2) Have you seen any examples of interlocking triangles in the church? (3) What questions do you have about the concept of triangles? (4) Has anyone in the group ever managed successfully to reposition himself or herself within a triangle? What was it like? What particular challenges did the person face? What seemed risky about it? What were the results? (5) What biblical stories or theological concepts seem to be related to the concept of triangles? Discuss, for example the Trinity from the point of view of triangles.

The church named a few triangles that are very apparent and are an ongoing problem in the church right now. The church pointed out that new people, when they come in, are not able to join in on ministries because the gatekeepers will not share the ministry. The group pointed out how certain family members triangulate.

This was a great exercise for them. They all agreed. The workshop ended with a group scenario. They were given a handout with an unhealthy power and control situation. The assignment: (1) select a timekeeper, a recorder, and a reporter. (2) Read the scenario. (3) Discuss and record the problem. (4) List the tactics of power and control used in the scenario. (5) Record and report the solution.

The group broke up into their small groups. They discussed the problem and every person had something to say. The entire group contributed to pointing out the unhealthy power and control issue in the scenario, and then solving the problem.

Session Three

Agenda

Dealing with Difficult People

Welcome

Prayer

Introduction of Guest Speaker

Presentation: Imperative People; Who Needs to be in Control

Questions and Answers

Closing remarks

Prayer

This session was about identifying people who use power and control for personal gain, and recognizing key phrases people use to be in control. The presenter gave examples of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, and how Wesley's Methodist movement was all about shared power in the church. This presentation challenged the

group to take a closer look at themselves and how the church leaders use the *Book of Discipline* as a means of unhealthy power and control. The presenter explained the *Book of Discipline* and how Wesley developed the *Book of Discipline* from the bible. The group left realizing that they were misusing the bible for power and control.

Part B of this third workshop introduced nine common traits of power people and four mistakes that churches and people make, as well as seven solutions on how to confront these issues. Dr. Leland Stauff in his book, *Power and Control*, points out nine ways to identify power people. Mistakes people make and seven principles to live by:

- Trait # 1 Competitiveness
- Trait # 2 Difficulty Submitting
- Trait # 3 Poor Delegator
- Trait # 4 Poor Listeners
- Trait # 5 Take Advantage of People
- Trait # 6 Vindictive
- Trait # 7 Insecurity
- Trait # 8 Savior Complex
- Trait # 9 Pride¹

The group agreed that these nine common traits are very much alive in the church. They recognized the destruction that these traits have caused over the years and how they

¹ Leland Stauff, *Power and Control: A Biblical Expose' of a Frequently Ignored Problem in the Church* (Pittsburgh, PA: Red Lead Press, 2007), 29-41.

have allowed members to destroy the church. But the group also mentioned how this workshop has so far made a difference towards bringing life back into the church again.

The group was also made aware of how churches and people make four major mistakes when confronted with power people in the church. People tend to:

1. Focus on surface issues
2. Tolerate the problem
3. Confuse clear biblical truths with methods and application
4. Allow enablers to get on the bandwagon because they agree on certain issues.²

The group pointed out some of the issues and how they have allowed themselves to let issues hang around too long. They were pleased with the information given to them. And lastly, Stauff points out seven principles to live by and use when these issues come up. They all agreed that old habits die hard.

Principle # 1 Stop the game of power, call a truce

Principle # 2 Resist all forms of power and control, and create standards for the leaders.

Principle # 3 The power we possess is not about ourselves, it is short lived. Only God has true power.

Principle # 4 Glorify God don't just talk it

Principle # 5 Be willing to give up your rights

² Stauff, *Power and Control*, 43-48.

Principle # 6 Look for influencers, ministers, nurturers, and shepherds

Principle # 7 Choose qualified leaders for leadership.³

The group has vowed to put these principles in place as soon as possible. They felt that these principles will not only guide the church into a healthier atmosphere, but it will hold those accountable who serve as leaders. The group then watched a video titled *Clergy Killers: When the Church Forsakes its Own Clergy*. This was a ninety minute film created to show the congregation how evil lives in the church among its members towards pastors.

Since this was a ninety minute film, the group wanted to watch forty-five minutes in this session and the last forty-five minutes in the last session, session four. After watching the first half, the group was astounded that that kind of behavior existed in the white church. They quickly pointed out some of their habits. The room was quiet and the spirits were low. They suggested that the entire congregation should see this film. The group then broke up for the third group scenario.

Their assignment was to (1) Select a time keeper, a recorder, and a spokesperson. (2) Read the scenario. (3) Talk about the problem. (4) Point out the tactics of power and control used in the scenario. (5) Report on your solutions. The group activity really got the group thinking about the use of power and control in the church, and how it is played out in the church among the members, guests, and leaders.

³ Stauff, *Power and Control*, 50-61.

Session Four

Agenda

Characteristics of what Healthy Leadership Structure Looks Like

Welcome

Prayer

Introduction of the Guest speaker

Presentation: The Roles and Structure of the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee

(SPPRC) in the United Methodist Church.

Questions and Answers

Closing Remarks

Prayer

The group needed to hear from the SPPRC. The SPPRC has been identified as the villains in the church, and too many of the members feel that the SPPRC seem to be the untouchables. Meaning, no one can tell them what to do or hold them accountable, and that they have all the power and can use it any way they choose to use it. This is not true. This was how the church understood the function of this group, as a matter of fact, in every UMC church in which the author has served, they have all had the same mindset towards the SPPRC. The focus group got a better understanding of how the SPPRC operates and the process they are given by the *Book of Discipline*.

After hearing the presentation given by the SPPRC, the focus group received a plethora of information about the process and felt better. The group was ready to support the SPPRC in any way that they could. Given the right information, and inviting the

participants into a conversation, the SPPRC did a great job sharing their commitment and responsibility for the church, as well as for the pastor and the pastor's family. The fourth session of this project led the focus group to discuss different models of healthy, accountable structure and leadership, and what that should look like. Models that were presented were.

- 10 Prescriptions for a Healthy Church
- Creating a Healthier Church
- Humble Leadership

The group watched the last forty-five minutes of the film, *Clergy Killers*. They pointed out unhealthy power and control issues in the film and paralleled those issues to some of the same issues that the church has experienced in the past, and before the author became their pastor. The film's illustrations of how unhealthy power and control took over the church had the focus group ashamed of the church's behavior towards the pastor, and the participants began asking for forgiveness. They all felt that the film *Clergy Killers* was a powerful experience.

The group broke into their groups for their final group activity. The last group scenario led the group into a discussion about a hostile member talking to the pastor in a negative way. The focus group was given their objectives. (1) Select a time keeper, a recorder, and a reporter. (2) Read the scenario. (3) Talk about the problem. (4) List the tactics of power and control used in the scenario. (5) Record and give a solution.

This exercise was a hot topic for the group because they openly said that the church has been known for fighting pastors, and that this was a major reason why they

could not keep a pastor over the last ten years. This scenario made them realize that there is a better way to vent frustrations, and that it is not the best way to resolve conflict.

At the last workshop session the group was given a post-test. This post-test was given to compare the group's answers to the pre-test.

The categories were:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

The results of the ten questions were:

Question 1. In social settings do you act superior, yet feel inferior?

No one answered strongly agree; 7% agreed; 20% were neutral; 53% disagreed; and 20% strongly disagreed.

Question 2. Is it difficult for me to listen quietly when someone is expressing an opinion with which I agree?

No one answered strongly agree; 13% agreed; 20% were neutral; 47% disagreed; 20% strongly disagreed.

Question 3. I deliberately avoid people who are as strong-willed as I am.

No one answered strongly agreed; no one answered agreed; 13% were neutral; 53% disagreed; 34% strongly agreed.

Question 4. I know some characteristics of a healthy leader.

40% strongly agreed; 53% agreed; 7% were neutral; no one disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

Question 5. I can recognize abusive power in the church.

47% strongly agreed; 47% agreed; 6% was neutral; no one disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

Question 6. I know some of the traits of those who need to be in control.

27% strongly agreed; 53% agreed; 13% were neutral; 7% disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

Question 7. I am able to identify sources of control in the church.

27% strongly agreed; 66% agreed; 7% were neutral; no one disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

Question 8. I know the effect of family dynamics in the congregation.

47% strongly agreed; 47% agreed; 6% was neutral; no one disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

Question 9. I submit to the authority of church leaders.

13% strongly agreed; 60% agreed; 20% were neutral; 7% disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

Question 10. I know what healthy power and control looks like in a church setting.

40% strongly agreed; 53% agreed; 7% were neutral; no one disagreed; no one strongly disagreed.

The outcome from the post-tests showed a significant amount of positive change from the pre-tests. The group had a change of heart towards healthy verses unhealthy control. They feel strongly about the change that needs to happen in the church. They also agreed to become mentors when the project becomes available for the entire congregation to go through the four workshops.

Implementation Two

Sermon Series Instrumentation

The following Sunday the author preached a sermon series that allowed the focus group to hear and see how power and control played out in the bible. The group was given a handout with three questions pertaining to power and control. The author used the same questions for all three texts and sermons. The questions were:

1. Where does unhealthy power and control show up in the text?
2. How does God deal with unhealthy power and control in the text?
3. How did the people respond to God's actions?

The First Sermon

Theme: Unhealthy Power and Control

Prayer

Scripture: Genesis 4:1-15

Subject: When Power meets Pride

After reviewing the questionnaire it is apparent that most of the participants did well after hearing the sermon preached and discovering where power and control was in the text. There was thirteen participants in the focus group that participated in the first sermon. All thirteen answered the questions with a strong sense of understanding where unhealthy power and control was in the text.

The Second Sermon

Theme: Unhealthy Power and Control

Prayer

Text: Genesis 11:1-9

Subject: Stick to the Plan!

The following Sunday sixteen participants in the focus group participated. After reviewing the questionnaires a few people struggled with finding where unhealthy power and control was in the text. Some did not answer the questions, and some only answered the first two. One participant did not know the story. Some of their answers made them sound confused. It seemed that the majority of the participants did well answering the second question. Eleven out of the fifteen participants did well finding the problem in the text.

The Third Sermon

Theme: Unhealthy Power and Control

Prayer

Text: John 18:1, 19:7-11

Subject: Who is Really in Control?

On the last Sunday of this unhealthy power and control sermon series, fifteen participants engaged the text. After reviewing the answers, twelve of the participants answered the questions in full narration, three participants used scriptures—chapter and verse—to answer the questions.

Overall the group did well. They engaged the text, and the majority of the participants stayed committed to the task that was before them. This exercise got them to open up their bibles. Some of them saw themselves in the biblical story acting out in an unhealthy way. Many of the participants mentioned that the sermon series guided them to see how unhealthy power and control was played out in biblical times, and how God dealt with it. Many of them said that those times are no different from these times. The church is still dealing with people who use unhealthy power and control, but they agreed that God has the ultimate power, and that God is still in control.

Each sermon lasted twenty-five minutes and gave the listeners illustrations pertaining to the subject and the theme. The illustrations acted as a road map to lead the listeners to listen for clues, and invited them to go on a treasure hunt to seek God's way of dealing with unhealthy power and control.

Implementation Three

Interviews, One on One Instrumentation

The third and final implementation of this project asked the focus group four questions. The group consisted of 14 participants. The questions were:

1. Where does unhealthy power and control exist in the church
2. How has unhealthy power and control been dealt with in the past in this church?
3. Can unhealthy power and control be improved in the church?
4. Do you believe that there is a positive path moving forward?

Participant #1 answered the first question by saying that unhealthy power and control exists in the pulpit, in the music ministry, and in family dynamics. When a certain family sits on one side of the church and does not connect with the congregation, and frowns when someone not of that family sits there, that shows unhealthy control of the pews. The participant answered the second question by pointing out that unhealthy power and control has never been dealt with in the past. Participant #1 believes that unhealthy power and control can be improved by speaking truth to power and delegating. The participant feels that there is a positive path moving forward, but only with Christ.

Participant #2 pointed out that unhealthy power lives in the pews, in the choir, and in business meetings of the church's leadership team. Unhealthy power and control has not been dealt with in the past. The church closed their eyes and turned their heads when families started fighting with each other. And there were families fighting with the pastors for control within the ministries. Participant #2 believes that the church can heal from unhealthy power and control through demonstrating humility and not letting pride come into play. Participant #2 also feels that there is a positive path through workshops and holding the leaders accountable.

Participant #3 sees unhealthy power and control in the committees, finance, and in the choirs. Participant #3 points out that unhealthy power and control has never been addressed in the past. The participant definitely feels that there is room for improvement, and yes, we are moving forward. Chaos has been exposed.

Participant #4 believes that unhealthy power and control is in the congregation. Participant #4 mentioned that unhealthy power and control has not been confronted in the

past. When asked whether unhealthy power and control be improved in the church, this participant believes that it can, if everybody gets on one accord. When asked if there is a positive path to move forward participant # 4 believes there is, but more people need to come together to make it work.

Participant #5 believes that unhealthy power and control is in the ministries and that there are different power struggles in the choir. Unhealthy power and control has not been dealt with in the past, but Participant #5 feels that the issue of unhealthy power and control can be improved if the families give up the power. The participant believes that there is a positive path moving the church forward. The church must begin by getting everybody to start talking to one another.

Participant #6 said that power and control exists among the members towards themselves. It was brushed over, no real serious conversation. People did whatever they wanted to do. Participant #6 believes that unhealthy power and control can be improved by people coming together. Participant #6 believes that there is a positive path moving forward through workshops and holding people accountable.

Participant #7 says that unhealthy power and control is everywhere in the church. The choir, pews and the ministries. Unhealthy power and control has not been dealt with in the past. It has been ignored. But it can be improved by making sure everyone get the true facts, stop trying to control people to think like I think. There is a positive path if we properly communicate with one another.

Participant #8 notes that unhealthy power and control is in the usher's board, in the ministries, and in the congregation. They cannot remember a time when someone addressed the issue. The problem can be improved, but it has to be identified. Participant

#8 believes that there is a positive path forward by letting go of the past. Leaders, and the congregation will have to learn to let go of the past.

Participant #9 identified unhealthy power and control as being in the congregation and in the ministries. Unhealthy power and control has not been dealt with. We have placated it. There are ways to improve unhealthy power and control by simply talking to one another. Participant #9 believes that the church is on a positive path. The workshops hit a home run.

Participant # 10 says unhealthy power and control exists in the members of the church. The participant said that unhealthy power and control has been dealt with by calling meetings and letting everyone air out their frustrations, but communication has always been a problem in the church. Unhealthy power and control can be improved if the church just learned to communicate. They see a positive path, but it must work for everyone, not just two or three people.

Participant #11 said that unhealthy power and control is in the congregation. If certain members cannot have their way they get mad and cause trouble for the church. It does not seem as if this problem has ever been addressed. Participant #11 believes that power and control can be improved, but the people must want to come together and share the power.

Participant #12 believes that unhealthy power and control is in the choir, congregation, and some leadership. Unhealthy power and control has been pushed aside and ignored. Possibly covered up to appease people. Participant #12 believes that unhealthy power and control can be improved. There seems to be a positive path in place.

Participant #13 said that unhealthy power and control exists among the people. The church has never dealt with this issue. Participant #13 believes that unhealthy power and control can be improved. There seems to be a positive path that the church is experiencing through the workshops.

Participant #14 believes that unhealthy power and control is everywhere in the church, mostly in the choirs, finance, and in other ministries. This problem has not been dealt with, just pushed aside. Certain people in the church have voice and others do not have voice. There has been a lack of leadership structure and no accountability over the years. Unhealthy power and control can be improved, but it is going to take those who are willing to take a stand and speak up. People who are outside the norm and leadership body, people who are not active in leadership and want to see success in the church need to speak up. Participant #14 sees a positive path, but believes that it is going to take new people to replace the old people.

Summary of Learning

From the beginning to the end, this experience has been very exciting and rewarding. The foundational, biblical, historical, theological, and the theoretical research that was done laid a strong foundation and supported this project. This led to a fruitful outcome for the project. The researcher has to say that he learned so much about himself that the researcher never knew was there, and this project helped the researcher to expose and confirm things that were within the researcher.

This project has unlocked some difficult and most private experiences on control in the researcher's life that the researcher did not mind sharing with the congregation.

After nineteen years serving in ministry, it was only after going through this project and learning experience that the researcher was able to see unhealthy power and control and the effects it can have on the congregation and guests. The researcher does not need to be in control of everything. And while the church needs order and structure, the participants and the researcher were able to see our challenges with unhealthy power and control, individually and corporately.

Therefore, the project invited the participants to step out on faith and go on a journey. They discovered a new identity, purpose, and goal within themselves and for the church. The information used in the workshops not only opened eyes, but also opened opportunity for ministry to develop in such a way that life and hope can be brought back to the church once again. The three instruments that the researcher used for this project were: the pre- and post-test for the workshops, preaching series (discovering unhealthy power and control in the bible), and the one on one interviews. These were all extremely helpful. They brought growth, wisdom, and a new insight.

The researcher found the one on one interview questions to be extremely helpful for the shy participants. It was apparent that the participants had the opportunity to open up more. When analyzing the second question regarding how unhealthy power and control had been dealt with in the past, the researcher noticed that thirteen participants gave the same answer. All of the participants said that unhealthy power and control had not ever been dealt with until now. It was evident that the participants were ready for a change in the church, starting with them. The participants spoke truth to power.

After the workshops were over the participants were very excited about the information they had received and were ready to get started disseminating the

information throughout the congregation. They were pleased with all of the guest speakers and the material that they offered. They all responded and asked great questions, as well as challenging questions.

The resources used to support this project provided a rich and meaningful experience to both the author and the participants. We were all engaged in conversation with the authors. Just to name a few books: *Creating a Healthier Church* by Ronald W. Richardson, *Humble Leadership* by N. Graham Standish, and *10 Prescriptions for a Healthy Church* by Bob Farr.

St. Andrew participants, the focus group, are ready to take the next step. That is, to introduce this model to the congregation. Their enthusiasm and zeal about their experience has started to create a buzz around the church. They are asking when we can infuse the church with this project and get them on board. It is evident that they were paying close attention when it came to the workshops, and are ready to apply the material to the situations that are apparently still brewing in the church. They recognized the practice of triangulation, what is missing in the accountability of leadership roles, and they know how to address unhealthy power and control.

The hypothesis: “When leadership of the local church is trained to recognize and understand the effects of healthy power in the church culture, it will impact church life,” was supported because the participants really felt that if people were taught to recognize unhealthy power and control it would help. The participants themselves learned how to recognize unhealthy power and control, and it has had a profound impact on their interaction with the church.

Conclusion

The project was a success. In the author's opinion it worked well due to the many ways that the project had to expose how unhealthy power and control can be seen and viewed in the business world, sports, in the home, and of course in the church. The project reached the intended participants in such a way that it got them to start looking at and communicating with one another about conflict in the church.

The resources that were used were extremely helpful and engaged the participants in such a way that some of them asked for the names of the authors. The workshops allowed the participants to hear other voices that were not connected to St. Andrew. The guest speakers provided strong personal testimonies about how they at times wore two hats when it came to power struggles. For example, one guest explained how power struggle can be seen in two different ways. One way is struggling with power or struggling while under the influence of power.

The scenarios in each workshop were powerful and really spoke out in a personal way. They made an impact on the participants' church lives, but also made an impact on the participants' personal lives as they utilized the same scenarios at home. All of the participants wanted more. More scenarios, more group discussions, and more one on ones. The researcher was very impressed with the consistency. We only had a couple of participants to drop off. The researcher learned that some of the participants were a little reluctant at first to really get involved. They had an expression that seemed to say here is another program that is not going to work, but we have to do it because the pastor wants us to.

But after the first two sessions those that were hesitant to fully engage in the project eventually came around and embraced the project, and later became the biggest advocates for the project. The researcher also learned that when it came to the one on ones, most of the participants were really ready to share, they were not so reserved.

The researcher believes that it was the privacy and the confidentiality that made them feel safe to openly talk about the elephant in the room. Not only did the project make the participants feel that it was important enough to come together, but the approach that was used made them sense the need to come together.

The researcher did not use the topic “unhealthy power and control” as a way of demeaning anyone in the church, but to share the researcher’s personal experience with unhealthy power and control. The intent was to create a win-win atmosphere and to gain the trust of the participants. The topic chose the researcher. And so, the researcher’s approach was to demonstrate humility and patience.

The researcher believes that getting people to see and accept that power and control is not bad, but that how we use it with other people is what matters, it makes a difference. When the participants realized that, their eyes, hearts, and minds began to open and they began to accept the project.

When people know better, people will do better. This project is very valuable for the life of the church. The researcher believe that when we are able to recognize the issue of unhealthy power and control, and then teach and heal from its effects, churches will experience a tremendous amount of growth.

There are a couple of things that the researcher would do differently with this project. Participants were given unique numbers to identify their pre- and post-tests. This

became a struggle. Midway through the workshops some of the participants forgot their number. A few of the participants tried to guess the number that they were given, so not all pre-tests and post-tests were able to be matched together.

Another challenge was with the preaching series. When asked to identify the unhealthy power and control in the text, a few of the participants wrote the chapter and verse down instead of engaging the text with dialogue. I believe that a bible study would have been better.

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